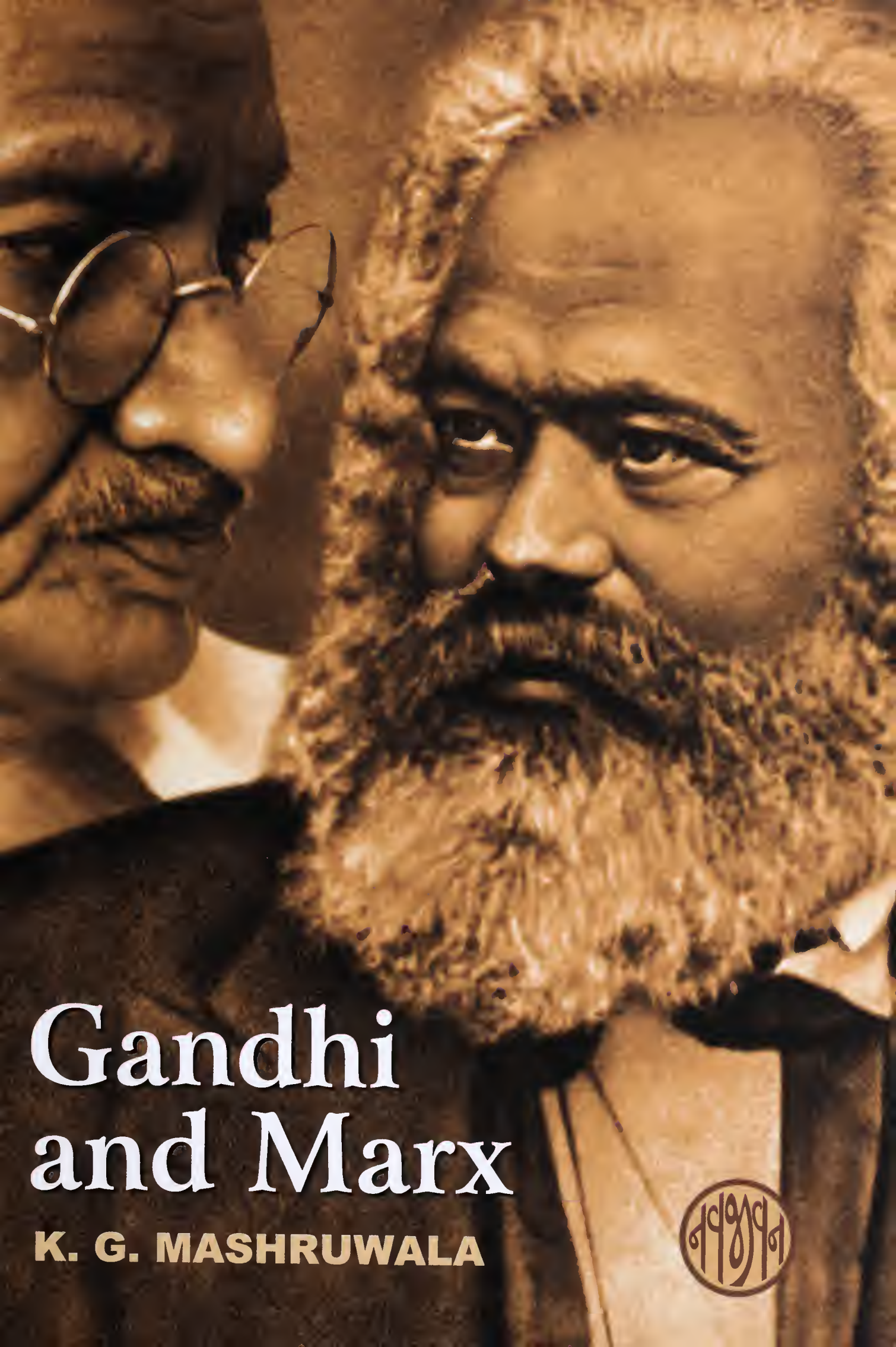

Gandhi and Marx

K. G. MASHRUWALA

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Gandhi And Marx

By

K. G. Mashruwala

Introduction

By

Vinoba Bhave

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Preface

The following had appeared in a series of articles published in *Harijan* in 1950. While issuing these in a book form, I have revised the articles and besides improving the language made additions and alterations in the light of suggestions and criticisms received. The presentation of the Marxian doctrine has been particularly reviewed so that no charge of distortion might be laid against it. This is by no means either a scholarly exposition of Communism or an authoritative exposition of the Gandhian thought, and the reader will not expect too nice an interpretation of either. It is sufficient if he gets a fair knowledge of the fundamental manner of approach of the two Masters and their adherents. In the exposition of the Communist doctrine, I must make particular and grateful mention of Shri R. M. Vakil and his friends of the Progressive Study Circle, Ahmedabad, for their detailed criticism of my articles and for supplying me a number of books and tracts on Communism. It is needless to say, however, that the responsibility of presenting the Communist doctrine is entirely mine, and their approval is not to be presumed. So, too, with regard to the Gandhian doctrine.

The reader will share the satisfaction with me that the book enjoys the benefit of an introduction by my respected colleague Vinoba. In spite of his strenuous programme of hard physical labour for several hours every day and a not too strong health, he kindly found time to write it in his own inimitable and illuminating manner. He has

added flesh and blood to my dry bony presentation, and made the picture of *Gandhi and Marx* more lively. The original of the introduction was written in Marathi, and I regret that it has not been possible to faithfully bring out its beauties in the translations.

A word about the language of the book itself. The articles were published simultaneously in the English, Hindi, and Gujarati editions of *Harijan*. They were not all written up first and then published in instalments, but were generally written week after week. It so happened that I chose the medium which came to me easiest in the process of my thought at the time of writing. The result was that some of the chapters were originally drafted in English, some in Hindi, some in Gujarati, and some were written independently in more languages than one. The exposition is somewhat briefer in English than in Hindi and Gujarati. The translations were made by me personally where the difference in language and length was marked. In other cases they were usually made by one or another of the friends, assisting me in the editing of *Harijan,* but were revised by me. Hence, all these three editions might be regarded as original, in spite of somewhat varying diction discernible in their different chapters. To those who wish to translate this book in other Indian languages, I would recommend the Hindi or the Gujarati text, and also Marathi so far as Vinoba's introduction is concerned and a reference to the English book only for a check up, in case of difficulty.

Finally, I am obliged to the workers of the Navajivan Press and *Harijan* office for sparing me the trouble of seeing the books through the press.

Wardha, 27th April, 1951 **K. G. M.**

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Introduction

1. Eternal Importance Of The Present

That the creation is without beginning is universally acknowledged. Even the earth which we inhabit is, according to both the ancients and the moderns, not less than 2,000 million years old. It is believed that in the beginning there was no life on the earth. It was, like the sun, a globe of flaming fire. Then it began to cool down,—a process which must have gone on for millions of years,—until it became sufficiently cool to enable life to subsist. Thereupon life sprang up on it. In course of time appeared man. Even human life, say the scientists, must be about a million years old by now. What are a mere hundred or two hundred years compared to this long long period of human existence? But the last hundred or two hundred years have come to assume so much importance for us that we tend to think that this hundred and odd years cover more than half of human history.

The Present, of course, has always a special importance. For, it is the fruit of the Past and seed of the Future. Whichever way you look at it, it has a distinction all its own. Being the meeting point of the Past and the Future, it is by its very nature a turning point—a period of revolution, for better or for worse, for the birth and development of life or for its disintegration and death.

Not only that; it is always unique as it never existed previously, nor would come back again. Take for instance, the Congress. It has been meeting almost annually for the last more than sixty years. Nevertheless, has ever a session been held that has not been acclaimed as unprecedented and momentous? Or to take a more homely example: when a mother looks at her new-born, does she not feel that no other mother must have ever gazed at a face like that? Lately I have been often approached by many a mother asking me to suggest for her new-born child a name such as might never have been given to any person before.

In short, not only is the Present a period of revolution, it is a period of revolution *par excellence*. The other day, a young friend said to me: "We have no use for that old *mantra*—*shanti*, *shanti*, *shanti* (Peace, Peace, Peace). We are now going to thunder forth thrice after the manner of the ancients the cry of *kranti*, *kranti*, *kranti* (Revolution, Revolution, Revolution)." I said, "It would be better if you uttered *kranti* once only. If you did it thrice it might push you even farther back than your original place. *shanti* is safe from any such risk. It is eternally old. But *kranti* goes stale with age. Therefore, uttering *kranti* thrice is hardly worthwhile. Say it only once and have done with it."

How can the Past ever gain the importance of the Present? It might have been supremely important in its own heyday—when it was the Present. That is a different matter. Moreover, this inherent eminence of the Present gains immeasurably in value and importance if it is also fraught with suffering. The period of suffering is always long. A single painful incident may easily devour many

a happy one and parade its own importance. The happy moments of life, on the other hand, are easily lost in the depths of oblivion. But pain persists and is forgotten only when it is overshadowed by a greater pain. Happiness has not the power to obliterate the memory of pain. On the contrary, happiness often serves as a vivid remembrance of past sorrows. Only a more acute pain may wipe out smaller ones. The past hundred or hundred and fifty years constitute for us our Present, and since it has been a Present with miseries to boot, it is no wonder that for us it has eclipsed the whole of human history.

2. Jail Seminars

What is it that has marked off our Present as a period of pain and misery? Looking superficially nothing seems to account for this state of affairs. There has been an enormous increase in, what are called, the amenities of life; heaps on heaps of articles of comfort and convenience have been manufactured. But look at it a little more closely and you will understand that this enormous increase in comforts, indeed, is the mother of all the appalling misery. Happiness and pain are oftentimes spoken of as opposites; but they are parents to each other. Happiness begets pain, and pain begets happiness. The latter will take its birth when it might; for the present, we are engaged in celebrating the birth of pain. What innumerable and immense troubles and obstacles beset this thing, we call happiness? Its very name brings before us the complicated problem of its sharing. Pain is free from that handicap.

Any one might grab the whole of it, if he liked. It will not excite another man's jealousy. A rare Mahatma, or a first-class fool, might feel delighted in seeking a share in it, but to adopt the language of the *Gita,* "such a Mahatma is too rare", and might be dismissed as such.

Our age has produced tons and tons of happiness, but it has, under its weight, crushed the mass of humanity all the world over. Bags of sugar are carried by the bullocks on their backs to make their way into the belly of the epicure; and the astonishing outcome is that the epicure gets a bad liver and the bullock a broken back! This is the miracle wrought by sugar, an article which is sweet beyond dispute.

When it comes to the sharing of happiness, one claims the lion's share, another that of the jackal. Nothing remains for the poor lamb. Rather, it itself comes to be shared between the lion and the jackal. This is a fable to illustrate the ignoble side of our age, which has made a countless number of people shed tears of sorrow. And the problem of problems with which we are confronted today is how best we can free ourselves from its meshes. All the cogitations, agitations and trepidations of the world are directed to this end.

*

Indian jails were filled to the brim with *satyagrahi* prisoners in 1930-32. We have read in the Bible how the mob demanded the release of Barabbas the thief, and the crucifixion of Jesus in his place. Similarly the Government had at that time released criminals from the jails to make room for the *satyagrahis.* Heaven alone can recount all that happened in those overcrowded houses

of 'correction'! Many immersed themselves in the study of astrology, and predicted over and over again the day of general amnesty. Despite the recurrent failures of their predictions, they did not give way to despair, but applied themselves even more assiduously to their studies. But their despair, though not outwardly expressed, was not to remain long concealed. Indeed, we had read of a Hundred Years' War in history, but our own patience had run out, and each month that came round sat heavy on our nerves. Ultimately, some of us took to religious practices and worship; some to experiments in cooking. Some made a harmonious combination of both. And others found out other suitable occupations like these to engage themselves with. Nevertheless these did not engage all of them. Some were still left idle, without an occupation. These began to speculate with the earnestness of Buddha, about the right solution, the panacea of all the ills which India and the world suffered from.

Those whose faith had confirmed them in the belief that the Gandhian way alone was the solution of the evil embarked on self-introspection and self-purification. They said to themselves, "This surely is the way. But we do not succeed because our feet do not keep to that way and wander astray. Just see how we send surreptitious messages outside though we have come here as *satyagrahis*. In like manner we obtain articles which are not allowed by the authorities, but which we think we need. This is how we observe *satya* (truth)! And as to *aagraha* (persistence), even this short period of a few months' incarceration hangs heavily upon us! This is the stuff we the so-called *satyagrahis* are made of! How can we hope to achieve

success with such weak character? Let us, therefore, make the best use of this seclusion and solitude which has come to us as a godsend, for developing our character." With this solemn resolve, they took to the practice of discipline and self-denial, to complete the jail tasks and after finishing them busied themselves in carding, spinning, weaving and even scavenging. But there were some who did not approve of this self-searching attitude. They argued: "You demand meticulous observance of truth and non-violence in a political fight. But, out of the numerous political struggles which peoples have fought everywhere in history, show us a single instance wherein fighters showed greater or even as much discipline and self-denial as we have done. If a Satyagraha struggle can succeed only on the condition of the transformation of the ordinary human nature, its success must remain a mirage, something beyond the realm of realization. What is the standard of high character, which you would set before the people in the practice of self-denial and discipline, and how long? When will there be a 'change of heart' of the wicked (rulers), and the consequent end of the suffering of the people? Can these be realized in the near future? We took to Gandhiji's way because we did not see any alternative to it. Granting that it is a good and faultless road, can that alone be sufficient reason for us to continue to go along it even if it does not lead us to our destination? On the other hand, look at Russia! What a stupendous revolution they have wrought in the twinkling of an eye! They have changed the face of the country beyond recognition, and are out to transform the whole world while we have caged ourselves here in the discipline of jail rules and truth and

non-violence. How will this avail us? You taunt us with being unable to endure a few months' jail. But to keep the entire host of workers throughout the country confined behind the prison bars is no small matter. It would have been a different matter, if the movement were vigorously going on outside. But it is all quiet outside, while we, inside, labour under a rigid code of self-discipline. Do you vouchsafe that Swaraj will be born out of such a combination of no-movement outside and our programme of self-improvement inside? Let us, therefore, realize that the way we have been treading along is wrong and instead of losing ourselves in this attempt of the search of the *soul*, let us busy ourselves in the search of the right *way*. Nothing is wrong with our souls which are just what they always have been!" With such protests they took to the study of the Communist and Socialist literature. It is said that at the time of the Universal Deluge when all land is submerged under water and there is an endless expanse of the sea, the solitary figure of the *Rishi* (sage) Maarkandeya is seen swimming in it. In the seclusion of the gaols, our young men swimming in the sea of Communist literature looked very much like that *Rishi*.

And really this literature—deep in some places and shallow in others—is as wide and shoreless as the seas. A few began to fathom the depths of Marx's *Capital*. But many were content with a dip merely in the not very deep propagandist literature flowing from Russia. Since the *Puranic* Age, perhaps, the Communists alone have shown such boundless zeal for propaganda, supremely regardless of the amount of repetition. The *Puranic Rishis* and the modern Russians both share the belief

that howsoever forgetful a listener or a reader might be, some impression,-may it be ever so little, will still be left on his mind, if a statement is constantly repeated. The readers of the *Puranas* laboured in the faith that there was a Heaven beyond this world which they would inherit after departing from here, and our young friends in the jails shouldered the labour of rowing through this vast Socialist literature in the faith that the Heaven had already descended in Russia.

During my incarceration in connection with the "Individual Civil Resistance" movement of 1940, a Communist friend advised me to read some Communist literature. I requested him to read it out to me while I span. He agreed and very kindly began to read out to me for an hour everyday some select Marxian publications. As I had already read Marx's *Capital* some years ago, I did not have much difficulty in following what he read. This went on for a few months. It was selected material that he read out to me and yet it made on me a strong impression of repetition and reiteration. That the minds of our young men instead of getting fed up, got heavily loaded with Communist ideas by their constant repetition is not to be wondered at.

3. Two Fundamental Creeds

Development of virtue and construction of a social order are the two extreme and fundamental creeds which have exercised man's mind from the beginning of time, regarding the end and aim of man's activities. The advocates of the

first doctrine maintain that life and the welfare of society depend on man's character, his moral qualities, and his effort at self-improvement. An individual's life is driven under the force of his moral nature. The social structure changes its form along with the development of human character. Hence, all lovers of good should concentrate their attention on the development of moral qualities. Laborious activity for constructing society (externally) serves no useful purpose. It leads merely to egoism. *Jagad-vyaapaara-varjam* (control of world-forces excepted) — is a well-known *sutra* (maxim) of Vedanta, and it marks the limit to which a devotee might aspire to rise. All that we must do is to ever strengthen our faith in the rules of spiritual and moral discipline such as non-violence, truth, self-control, contentment, co-operation etc., and try to incessantly translate these in our day-to-day life. Let us do this and all else 'will be added unto it'. No mother needs to be told that she should feed her child. No child needs to be told that it should cry if it is hurt. Given the necessary parental love the child will be fed, given the hurt crying will follow.

This creed manifests itself spontaneously in the hearts of the godly. The *Gita* gives a long list of the moral qualities and characteristics indicative of *jnana* (knowledge), and Jnanadeva has given a beautiful elucidation of these in his masterly commentary.

The creed and ideology of the Communists is the very opposite of this. They hold: "What you call the development of moral virtues, is a set of phenomena, which though they become manifest in the mind, are not, however, the creation of the mind, but are the result of

environments. The mind itself is the product of its material environment. *Bhautikam chittam* (mind is a product of matter). A child gets afraid at the sight of a bearded man, because the mother has no whiskers. Had the mother been moustached and bearded, the child would probably have got afraid at the sight of a clean-shaved person. You say that the child cries naturally (inevitably) on being hurt. But prick a pin and pain will follow equally naturally. Mind is not a substance independent of matter. It is just a reflection of the world outside—an image. An image cannot govern the substance, it is the latter which governs the former. If you bring about a change in the substance, the mind will reflect the change, that is, will seem to have changed in character. Sound sleep at night makes for a cheerful waking in the morning, and brings about the emergence of *sattva guna,* the condition for the manifestation of clarity and knowledge. After a while, when the person feels hungry, *rajas*, the dynamic quality, comes to the surface and throws the mind into a state of brisk activity. And after the meal, the quality of *tamas*, lethargy, becomes supreme. It is unnecessary, therefore, to give so much importance to the three qualities. Create the right conditions and they will inevitably give rise to the right set of qualities. Hence, change the material environments as rapidly as you can and by whatever means available, and do not waste your time vainly in weaving fantasies. The mind of man will remain what it is. Do what you will, it will neither become like that of a lower animal, nor like that of your imaginary God. It is set within a limited structure. With the improvement in the environment, it shows a little development, with its

deterioration a slight retrogression. Do not worry about it. If violence is necessary for the reformation of society, do not scream out with alarm, 'Alas! goodness is dead!' Take it easy, since it puts an end to a bad state of society. The violence employed in order to gain that end cannot be classed on a par with ordinary violence. It is violence on a high level. Nay, it is really a virtue. If you can understand this, the proper development of character, which you worry about, will also follow."

So, these are the two extreme doctrines. The rest have to take their places between these two, according to their respective capacities. Some say: "The importance of changing the social structure is not denied. But it should be brought about only through the development of particular moral attributes. There are certain abiding moral values and standards. If in a hurry to set up somehow a particular type of social structure, these values and standards are lost, it will be tantamount to losing the capital in an avaricious bid for interest. There is no social structure, which can be permanent, universal, and capable of freeing man from worry for all time to come. It will and must change according to the particular conditions of time, place and other factors. It is no good making a fetish of social reconstruction. After all, it is the people, who construct a society. Hence, a society will be as the individuals making it. Hence, any scheme of changing the society must be not only subject to the preservation—indeed, enhancement—of standards of character and moral values, but the change must be brought about by the means and strength of character and moral values. We must not worry if it takes place

gradually and at a seemingly lower pace. The food which is well masticated is also well digested. And the slow pace will in the end prove itself to have been the speediest.

"Please do not suppose that when we talk of character and moral standards we are out to transform man into an angel. We have no need for that conceit. Human beings that we are, there is no fear of our turning into angels, no matter how good we become. Therefore let us achieve, without any fear of risk, as much moral development as we possibly can. That a proper social structure considerably assists moral development is true. But it is truer still to say that a good social structure can be achieved only when there is adequate moral development. Steadfast faith in moral values is the foundation on which the social structure is built. How can you hope to strengthen an edifice after tearing out the very foundation?"

To this some others say: "We agree that a change in the social structure should be brought about consistently with the preservation of eternal values. Faith in virtue must not be allowed to get weak. But one should not forget that to meet a particular *(naimittika)* situation, every general rule *(nitya-dharma)* has its exceptions. For instance, saying daily prayers is a principle with you, and you hold them without fail and at an appointed hour. But suppose there was a fire in your neighbourhood just at the time of your prayer, would you not rush to extinguish it? You will hold your prayers calmly and with an easy mind after putting out the fire. This is what may be called *nitya-naimittika-viveka* (right discri-mination between the general and the immediate duties). This sense of discrimination is needed in all spheres of life.

We do not agree with the Communists in their view that there can be no revolution without violence. We believe that in a country like India and in a democratic set-up of government, it is quite possible to bring about a revolution through the ballot-box, without resorting to violence. Nor do we mind if it takes a few years to create a public opinion to that end. We shall patiently continue to labour for that purpose. But in case the party in power does not preserve the purity of the elections, and abuses its position of authority, insistence on the purity of means (non-violence) will spell constant reverses. Hence, we do not regard it to be improper to resort to other than non-violent method as an inevitable and painful duty in a particular situation *(naimittika dharma)*. You may call it, if you like, excusable action in an emergency *(aapad dharma)*; but please do not call it a sin or a crime *(adharma)*. Such acts in an emergency need not destroy permanent values. Granting that there would be a slight deviation from the right path, it could be set right again afterwards. If a screw has to be loosened in order to carry out repairs, it can be re-tightened afterwards. The permanent values will be made stronger, the moment the transfer of power is effected. The method is like the one of shaking a peg to drive it deeper and making it firmer. This temporary recourse to violence is in the interest of non-violence itself. If we do not do that, non-violence may recede even farther away from us. Do we not prune a plant so that it may grow more swiftly? You have to make a distinction between laying the axe at the root of a tree and pruning its branches. Capitalism, imperialism, racialism, all are out to strike at the root of non-violence.

Communism also strikes at its very root by its faith in and indiscriminate practice of violence. Maybe it is not its intention, all the same the result is as if that was intended. Hence, we cannot support Communism. But at the same time we regard the holding up of all progress and the prolongation of the miseries and suppression of the poor in the name of moral values as a disproportionate overvaluation of particular virtues. Besides, we hold that the use of arms, for the purpose of resisting a foreign aggression or suppressing an internal disorder; is not violence, but a part of the duties of a State. It is what is called *danda-dharma* (the duty of punishing the evil). Barring such exceptions, we agree with you in your insistence on non-violence for all other purposes."

The doctrines of the saints and those of the Communists are two fundamental doctrines. The other two ideologies described above are what may be called ethical approaches. Of these two ethical ideologies the first has been preached in this country most effectively by Buddha and Gandhiji. A few other religious teachers have also accepted it. Only a few *Smriti* texts have given it their support. Most of the *Smriti* writers prefer and advocate the second ethical approach. Most Congressmen, Congress-groups, and almost all Socialists, who swear by Indian nationalism, seem to belong to this school. Several of even those who are known as Gandhi-ites tend ultimately to veer round this position.

This analysis leads to the conclusion that what Shri Kishorlal has discussed here is the relative merits of Gandhiji's ideology based on Satyagraha ethics and the Communist ideology of social reconstruction through revolution.

4. Marx and Gandhi

What can be a more fascinating study to us in the present age than that of a comparison between the ideologies of Gandhi, the great soul *(mahatma),* and Marx, the great thinker *(mahamuni)*? If the last hundred years or so of the social life of humanity were boiled away, the residue will most likely be these two great names. Lenin is ingested in Marx. And the shadow of Tolstoy spreads over Gandhi. The two ideologies stand face to face, each bent on swallowing up the other. On the surface it might seem that the two contestants occupying the arena are the Communists led by Russia and the Capitalists under the mask of Democracy by U. S. But ideologically the latter has lost all vitality and though it might appear doughty on the strength of its military force I do not regard it as really existent as a rival against Communism. On the other hand, though the Gandhian ideology stands nowhere in an organized form, yet inasmuch as it is impregnated with the virility of right thinking, I believe that ultimately it will be Gandhism with which Communism will have its trial of strength. These are the two powerful ideologies which Kishorlalbhai has weighed up in this small book. The subject is so full of topical interest that in spite of his 'savourless-clear' style[1]

1 Indian poets describe cotton as a fruit of juiceless, clear fibres. There is a pun on the Sanskrit words for juice (rasa) and fibre *(guna),* which also mean respectively (literary) savour and merit, and compare with cotton a literary composition which is clear and pure, but without literary flourish and savour. —K. G. M.

the reader will not be able to lay it down until he has read it from cover to cover. Kishorlal's exposition of the Gandhian thought will be regarded as authoritative since he is the author of *Gandhi Vichar Dohan*[1] (Digest of Gandhiji's Ideas) published several years ago. And though his treatment of the Marxian doctrine may not be considered to be equally authoritative, I believe that he has taken enough care to see that no injustice has been done in presenting it.

Whatever interest the world may or may not take in the comparative study of Gandhi and Marx, in our own country at least, it has become a subject of everyday discussion among the educated. Every discourser attempts to weigh and measure them up according to his capacity. If the Gandhian thought shows up a halo of spirituality around it, Communism has at its back the support of a scientific terminology. Having proved its worth by securing Swaraj for us, Gandhism may no longer be dubbed visionary and impracticable. And Communism, too, has for the moment proved its virility by rejuvenating the hoary old China. This tempts some workers to seek a reconciliation of the two systems, and has led to the enunciation of formula like, "Gandhism is Communism *minus* violence". The fact of the matter is that these two ideologies are irreconcilable; the differences between them

1 The book was published in Gujarati, with the authority of Gandhiji and ran into three editions. It was also published in Hindi, Marathi and other Indian languages, and has been a text-book in Gandhian institutions. Its publication has, however, been discontinued, as it needs to be revised and considerably re-written to incorporate the developments in Gandhiji's ideas since 1940. The old edition is, however, still read in Gandhian institutions — Publisher.

are fundamental. And these chapters make it as clear as day that they are deadly opposed to each other.

On being told that Gandhism differed from Communism only in its strict emphasis on non-violence, I said: "Two persons were so physically alike that one could have well served as the double of the other in a political fraud. But there was a slight difference. One breathed, the other did not. The result was that a dinner was being prepared for the one and a coffin for the other." The likeness between these two ideologies bereft of this trivial (!) difference of *ahimsa* is similar to the above pair of doubles. Kishorlalbhai has shown that even their noses and eyes were dissimilar. It must be so necessarily; for how can the noses and eyes of the living be like those of the dead, however much they might appear alike externally?

Communism being obviously an ideology of attachment *(aasakti),* I never considered it worthy of a philosophical examination. Although its votaries have erected an apparently grand philosophical edifice around it, essentially it is devoid of any philosophical content. It is so, because it is not an edifice at all but a pretentious jumble. Their vision is all yellow with intellectual jaundice. For example, they believe in an eternal element which they call 'conflict'. There is nothing else in the world but 'conflict'. In the ultimate analysis, 'nothing else is'. They remind one of the Atomist Kanaada (कणाद), who died ejaculating: "Atoms! Atoms! Atoms!" The breast of the mother overflows with milk for her new-born baby. How does the miracle happen? From their point of view it is the result of a conflict between the breast of the mother and the mouth of the child. I have cited the example in a light vein, but these people will

accept it in all seriousness. In short, if even what we regard as co-operation is reduced by them into a conflict, how great a conflict must an actual resistance be in their eyes! It would have to be called, to adopt the Raghubirian method of coining technical terms, "per-conflict".[1] How can one argue with such obsessed people? One can only wonder at them. They are not concerned with devising a technique to accord with a true philosophy. They are out to manufacture and trim a philosophy to suit their technique.

They also frequently discuss whether the mind has emanated from matter, or vice versa. None but a lunatic will doubt that mind has emanated from matter. Had mind been the creator of the Universe, who ever would have had any use for God? But though mind is the product of matter, the *Atma* i.e. Spirit remains a separate entity beyond both mind and matter. But the *Atma* is nowhere to be found in the Communist laboratory and, if anybody shows its traces to them, they will deny its existence without the least hesitation. To such a dialectician Shankara-charya said, "Friend, I have no quarrel with you. For you, who deny the *Atma*, are yourself the *Atma*. If you agree, it will be proved by your acceptance, and if you deny it, it will be proved by your denial." He who alleges that he is asleep proves his wakefulness quite as much as he who asserts that he is awake. Thus, on account of its rejection of this third factor, the *Atma,* who gives form and substance both to mind and matter, Communism, caught in the whirl of social reconstruction, has no independent and important place for virtue. What to us are spiritual qualities are to them merely the product

1 As in peroxide, permanganate etc.

of economic conditions. A soul-less ideology has no place for the freedom of the individual. Who cares to count the number of hairs which the barber snips off from one's head? Individuals come and go, society abides; therefore it alone truly exists; the individual counts for nothing.

Just as the sons of Sagar discovered the source of the Ganga, so also these thinkers have traced the whole course of human history. And they have arrived at the conclusion that just as an arrow that has been shot will not deflect from its path but must take a definitely determinable course, so also it is with mankind. Its past history has decided once for all its future course. There is no longer any freedom of action left for us. Everything is determined. There will be first rivers of blood, then rivers of milk and honey, and then will follow those of fresh and cool water flowing by each happy home assuaging the thirst of all mankind. Their study and research of history has provided them with a well-knit science of revolution as exact as Euclidian geometry. Marx foretold even the order and sequence in which revolutions will take place in the different parts of the world. Although this prophecy has not exactly come true, the discrepancy should be regarded just a slip in calculation, — like slips in astrology, which are not regarded as sufficient to warrant a conclusion that the science of astrology itself is wrong. Just as the warrant of Death cannot altogether be avoided, so, too, the destined course of revolution. Hence, all that a man may do is, under the circumstances, to co-operate with it, and help it on as much as possible.

Kishorlalbhai has written this little book to show that the Gandhian ideology cannot fit itself in the framework of this extreme doctrine.

5. Rigid Schooling and Independent Thinking

They say that Valmiki wrote the Ramayana long before the birth of Rama, and Rama conformed to every word of it during his earthly career and, so, had also no occasion to worry himself about using his own judgment in order to take a decision. He had just to consult the book and act accordingly. Since the consequences had also been predicted, he was not worried about the results also. So, too, is the case with the Communists. Lenin acted as Marx had prescribed; we, too, (according to them) have merely to follow him and straightaway reach our goal. If at times there appears a discrepancy between the words of Marx and the actions of Lenin, the Pandits of Communism have of course to labour a little to prove that there is no real discrepancy. This is not very difficult. For, it is a well-known maxim of interpretation that a smriti-text (rule) must conform to a shruti-text (law). And, hence, if a rule is clear, then one need only so interpret the law that the former is justified! Do that and you get the 'line clear'!

It is quite otherwise with the Gandhian ideology. If Communism is a solid and imposing structure of granite, Gandhism is an ever-changing amoeba. If we examine Gandhiji's ideas we will find them always growing. If his later pronouncements contradict his earlier ones, he would ask us not to worry about reconciling the two, but to accept the later and reject the earlier and proceed further. Even in his major fights, he had no premeditated plans, no technique, no ordered arrangement etc. Since he used

to say, "One step is enough for me," why should the Lord show him two? And, what was the amount of authority to be attached even to his latest utterances? His answer was "Do not be authority-bound. Use your own talent. You might ask me while I am available. Thereafter everyone is free to think and decide for himself." That is why there is no unanimity of ideas even among his closest followers. A critic once remarked to me ironically, "Gandhiji was a devotee of the *Gita* and so are his associates. And they have all written something on the *Gita*. But each one has an interpretation different from that of the other!" We might ignore this particular satire as it simply proves the inexhaus-tibleness of the *Gita*. The fact remains, however, that there is not a single problem of life — not even *khadi* which is the basis of Sarvodaya, — whereon all the close associates of Gandhiji will declare the same mind in every respect. That is why someone had suggested to Gandhiji that he should set forth his ideas in a systematic and formal treatise. But Gandhiji answered, "For one thing, I have no time; for another, I am still experimenting. Hence, let the treatise develop slowly of itself, if it does at all." And, of course, he was right. But the answer struck me home for another reason also. All that a well-written treatise can do is to furnish a reply to ideologies which are opposed to it. But just as a policy of armaments by one country does not deter others from increasing their armaments but on the contrary encourages them to do so, — thereby creating more problems in its wake, — so also the war of words created by scholarly systems does not contribute to clarification of ideas or narrowing down of differences, but only creates more confusion. Therefore,

it is much better to allow thought to work freely than to beat and drive and shut it up into the rigidity of a system. It is possible that this might lead to discordance and schisms. And, as had happened among the followers of Buddha who split up into four different schools, the followers of Gandhi might split up into ten, each going his separate way. This can be prevented, as Gandhiji has said, only by everyone using his own talent and assuming responsibility to speak for himself (in his own name).

6. Three Gandhian Principles

Kishorlalbhai has tried to give shape to Gandhian thought consistently with elasticity and freedom. He has built up its framework on three principles: (i) *Varna-vyavastha* (principle about vocation for living), (ii) trusteeship and (iii) decentralization. Let us briefly consider each.

(i) Gandhiji has adopted the old traditional concept of *varna-vyavastha* (socio-economic order), but has put an entirely new meaning and spirit in it. The new idea is, nevertheless, derived from and based on the spirit and purpose of the old. To my mind this is an experiment in applied *ahimsa*. Instead of rejecting old terms and ideas or concepts which have been accepted and respected by a community, the non-violent way is to retain them, give them broader meaning, evolve their forms and infuse new life into them. Synthesization, which is a fundamental characteristic of India's mind has arisen entirely from this non-violent technique. So gentle is this technique that there is not even the awareness of the word having

been charged with a new meaning. It looks as if the old meaning had been just polished and brushed up a little. The *Gita* pointed out this way with its extended applications of words like *yajna* etc. No doubt, there is considerable danger in this technique of the meaning of words getting distorted. When this happens it is then a practice of untruth, rather than that of *ahimsa*. It is *ahimsa* only if the word is not distorted, but a new meaning is—so to speak—gently and reverently drawn out of it, as when they milk a cow. Gandhiji was born and bred in Indian culture, and he spoke mostly to the people steeped in that same culture. I suppose that is the reason of his acceptance of the idea of *varna* (heredity of vocation). One cannot say with certainty that, had Gandhiji been born and bred elsewhere and addressing a different society, the word and the concept of *varna* would have suggested itself to him independently and as an essential part of his idea of a non-violent social order. But this much might be still asserted with confidence that he would have been compelled to accept its underlying principle, though the language might have been different. What I mean to say is that those who object to the words *varna* and *varna-vyavastha* need not be startled at Gandhiji's use of them. We are not concerned with words but with their content: (a) Equal wages for all work, (b) absence of competition, and (c) a system of education which takes the fullest advantage of the hereditary capacities of the people,—these three constitute the essence of *varna-vyavastha*. In our opinion, this is all that is needed in a non-violent social structure.

(ii) The word *trusteeship* also, like the foregoing *varna-*

vyavastha is disliked by many. There is no doubt that the word *varna-vyavastha* in its origin conveys a right idea and a wiser order. Perhaps, the same cannot be said with certitude of the theory of trusteeship. The word and its abuse seem to have been born together. But it has a good connotation in law, and Gandhiji having been a student of law, the word seems to have clung to him. Also being a votary of truth, he associated with it only the higher side of its meaning and use. As I have not been a student of law, despite the use of this word by Gandhiji, it has failed to stick to or attract me. However, it does not come in the way of my understanding and appreciating the idea which Gandhiji sought to express through it. Some of the key words of the *Gita* such as *aparigraha* (non-possession), *samabhaava* (equalism, sense of equality or oneness with all) etc. had taken a strong hold of Gandhiji's mind and, it seems, when he began to meditate on how he could apply these attitudes of the mind to practical life, this legal term *trustee* came to his help and stood him in good stead. Gandhiji has stated in his autobiography that the study of the *Gita* illumined the meaning of the word *trustee,* and the word, in its turn solved for him the problem of non-possession. In short, Gandhiji held that not only in the present condition of society, but in every condition whatever the only practical way of practising non-possession is to use one's (tangible and intangible) powers as a trustee. Kishorlalbhai has explained the concept so lucidly as to be understood by even a person of ordinary ability. I feel that it leaves no room for any misunderstanding of the idea.

Even if inequality of wealth is abolished as being the result

of an unjust social order, the inequality of the intellectual and physical powers cannot be wholly done away with. Let us assume that with education and regulation even these inequalities will be greatly reduced. Still, even in an ideal state we cannot conceive of their total abolition. The conclusion is that whatever talents, physical strength, wealth, or other capacities a person might possess, he should take them as having been given to him as a trustee, for the benefit of the world. This is the noble idea of trusteeship. But selfish people have so debased the word that it seems nearly impossible to restore it to its pristine purity. I have, therefore, substituted for it another word, *Vishwastavritti,* (विश्वस्तवृत्ति) i.e. the attitude of confidence, — a word which is free of any undesirable associations. The principle that none must depend on another, we might accept as sound being a counsel of self-reliance. But social life depends on mutual confidence. Certainly we cannot make it a principle that none must place confidence in another. A rule of conduct based on such a counsel would, indeed, be the erection of a hell on earth. Parents repose confidence in their children, children in their parents, and neighbours in one another. This is as it should be. Similarly there should be mutual confidence even among the various nations of the world. If we cannot work on the principle of mutual confidence, regarding it as risky, the inference is that we think and act at a sub-human level. The feeling of mutual confidence can be promoted by education. If instead of doing it, we attempt to reduce the whole society to a mechanical system in order to obviate this botheration of placing confidence, it will be, to say the least, intellectual indolence.

A social order based on confidence means a harmonious

planning of the varied and peculiar capacity of every member of society. This idea is well expressed by the Sanskrit word *loka-sangraha* (accommodation and adjustment of every one or the total wellbeing of all). The use of one's capacities for the good of all from a feeling of confidence is implicit in individual non-possession. And this is a fundamental principle of *loka-sangraha*. We may reject the word trusteeship, if we like, but we must not reject this principle of mutual confidence.

(iii) It is different with *decentralization,* however. Since the word is a recent one, it has not yet gathered any good or bad associations. Both the word and its meaning, or the idea behind it are new. But, one may ask, was it not all decentralized before the advent of the machine age? What is new in it then? Well, the fact is that prior to the machine age it was not a decentralized order. The fact that industries were carried on in villages in independent small units or plants does not constitute decentralization. Decentralization presupposes a comprehensive all-pervading idea behind the various village industries. In the absence of any such idea, small non-centralized industrial units mean merely scattered industries. There were plenty of them before the machine age. But they were easily swept off with the first impact of the machine age. Decentralization (that is intelligent non-centralization) will stand on a firm foundation. Not only will it not be blown off, but will disintegrate the machine age itself. The present machine age, in spite of its name, is wholly unlike a machine, being totally uncontrolled. The Communists want to replace it by a well-controlled machine age. But like all other weapons, the machines, too, though invented

by man, are inherently non-human. Hence, they cannot be humanized beyond a certain limit. On the contrary, they establish their own mastery over man and make him their slave. Clearly, the term *weapons* here mean the weapons of war and not those helpful ones used, for instance, by the surgeon. In the same way, the machine in this context refers to the exploiting machines which create unemployment, idleness and intellectual dullness, and not those obliging ones, which having been, so to say, given a human touch fit into man's hands like a subsidiary limb, and rush to his aid to assist him in his work. We may take, for example, the wheel-barrow here. We are at present engaged in digging a well, and I see day after day how greatly it helps us in removing the mass of dug up earth. And I hum to myself Senapati Bapat's words, "Hail, my Tool!" The wheel-barrow is also a gift of the machine age. Therefore, when we affirm that decentralization will disintegrate the machine age, what I mean to convey is that we shall disintegrate it after we have drawn out all that is good in it. Indeed, it will not be disintegrated until then. The former non-centralized village industries lacked this power of digesting and assimilating the advantage of the machine age. This is the fundamental difference between purposeful decentralized industries and the old non-centralized village industries. Hence, both the word *decentralization* and the idea which it expresses are new. If this distinction is borne in mind, most of the objections which are brought against decentralization will become as blunt as a sword struck against a rock.

But decentralization is not to be confined merely to industries. The process of decentralization applies equally

fruitfully to the authority of the State. Even thinkers who are avowedly intent on building up a non-violent social order at times lose sight of this fact. They support the demand for industrial decentralization; but at the same time they often plead for a strong central authority (at least for some period) for the preservation of the former! Even the Communists do not want the State to exist for ever. They say it will wither away automatically, even, as *ghee* (clarified butter) melts away in the summer heat. But until that stage sets in, they want it to be solid—not merely as solid as the frozen *ghee* in winter,—but as solid and strong as the iron hammer which smashed Trotsky's head. Almost all 'responsible' elders of different political faiths right from the earliest times down to this day have performed this self-contradictory feat of pleading for a strong central government during the 'transition stage'. Gandhiji, however, conceives of the decentralization of political authority as being equally necessary at every stage and period, and for all time. It is necessary in the beginning, during the middle, and till the very end. But our friends say, "It may be put aside as either a story of the hoary past—the *Rama-rajya* of *Tretayuga*—or as a Utopia of the future *Sarvodaya*. For the moment, we have no use for it."

7. Two Mothers

Whatever differences there might be between Gandhism and Communism, there are also points of similarity between them and these, too, are important. A Sanskrit poet traced similarity between even Rama and Ravana through the common syllable *ra*. There is no wonder then that there are common points between these two ideologies, since both of them have originated from a desire for the welfare of the masses. The cause of the have-nots is the basic sentiment running through the both. Kalidas has said somewhere that a small blemish in a thing endowed with many virtues not only makes the former ignorable, but even heightens the value of the latter.[1] The converse of this can be asserted with equal propriety. That is, a single virtue of great intensity can swallow up a multitude of blemishes. Such is the supreme merit of intensity. So wretched is the condition of the poor masses throughout the world that whoever shows, with the intensity of a mother's love, the large-heartedness and boldness to adopt — nay, to raise higher — these wretches, may be credited with a worth comparable to that of the very sanctifying name of the Lord Himself.

Both Gandhism and Communism regard the wellbeing of the poor and the oppressed with the intensely loving regard of the mother. It often happens, however, that the infatuation to see immediate results gets the fond mother involved in entanglements of indiscretions, which

1 एको हि दोषो गुणसन्निपाते निमज्जतीन्दोः किरणेष्विवाङ्कः ।

— कुमारसंभव, १. ३.

make her overlook the far-reaching results of her methods upon the child. This has happened to Communism. Mere intense and loving regard of the mother does not solve the child's problems. It is essential because it indicates keenness to seek the solution. But the solution itself requires the talent of an expert.

The other day a young Communist was discussing the subject with me. He was keen, but had not lost his power of independent thinking. I asked him, "Can violence be regarded as the weapon of the masses?"

He said: "Not as a general rule. But under particular circumstances and with adequate efforts, the masses can be prepared for using the weapon of violence."

I observed: "Granting that violence can be generated among the people for a particular purpose, how can it help them? Surely, you do not suppose that a revolution once brought about will continue to give its results for all time to come, like an endowed fund! The artificial cultivation for a short period of a quality which is not natural to the masses is like borrowed capital. Ultimately, it will transfer the power to those few who possess that quality—the capital—as a natural aptitude. And, if you feel that it might be possible to bring about a permanent change in the nature of the people as a whole, I say, even if it were possible, it would be a great calamity. For, in that case, it means that man is to be made a ferocious animal. Its results would be more dangerous than you imagine."

To this my young friend replied: "Let the results be what they will. Let us first change the present condition. One step is enough."

"You might get a momentary illusion of having changed

the present condition. But the reaction will be worse than the present evil."

"Let it be so," he said. "We shall think of it when the reaction begins."

"This is the reply of a confused and distressed mind, not of a scientific one. Communists lay claim to scientific thinking."

"Yes," my friend said. "They do make that claim and assert that once they got the power they would bring about a permanent order. I do not believe in the possibility of establishing an order, which can last for all time. Nothing can be permanent in the world. But for this generation it is absolutely necessary to put down the supremacy of the capitalists. Let the future generations solve their problems, when they arise."

Confirmed Communists will perhaps regard this comrade to be a wavering follower. I compare him with a lunatic with lucid intervals. If the Communist philosophy sets forth a permanent order of society, it is only an opiating drug. The background of the mind of an ordinary Communist is simply to mind the immediate results. It exhibits the intensity of the mother's love and concern, but not the discernment of the Master-Mother, as a Guru is called in Indian languages.

8. The Double-Edged Weapon

Be that as it may. The destitute condition of the illiterate masses of India continues to be the same as before even after the attainment of independence. They desire to be extricated out of it by any means whatever. They have neither the capacity nor the leisure to understand the various ideologies and isms. Any god that will respond to their supplication will be accepted by them. Hence it will not do to ignore the warning which Kishorlalbhai has sounded towards the end of his book. Neither denouncement of Communism, nor a convincing or smashing reply to it, nor its suppression by force will avail us here. Just as in the monsoon, waters of all rivers and streams flow towards the ocean, so in Swaraj the services of all workers should flow towards the villages and the distress-stricken people.

Fortunately, the heart of the masses is sound even in their affliction. Village people still believe that if they are ever to be saved, it will be by the Gandhian way alone. The present Government is constituted of Gandhiji's colleagues. Congress, the greatest political organization of the country, is also an institution reared by Gandhiji. The Sarvodaya constructive workers are but the avowed followers of the Gandhian philosophy. The Socialists of India too are, but Gandhiji's sons. They have declared their ideal to establish *satyagrahi* Socialism in India. If all these various bodies or parties plunged themselves into the service of the people in a spirit of co-operation to the

best of their capacities, even though in accordance with their respective ideas, where would poverty, ignorance and misery find a place to stay? But all the four have taken to four separate ways, each running down the work of the other three. The result is that a fifth one is fast marching towards the country. Who is this fifth? In the language of the *Upanishads,* it is *Mrityu* (Destruction) — (मृत्युर्वावति पञ्चम:।)

One alleges, "The people are literally dying of starvation." Another replies, "No, they do not die of starvation, but of some disease." No doubt the starving person does develop some disease before his death! The condition is like the one described by Swami Ramadas:

> *"There is nothing to eat,*
> *There is no place to go to,*
> *How can I have an urge to sing?*
> *Where shall I go to beg for my alms?"*

But I neither blame anyone for this situation, nor despair. I blame none, because ours is a very great country and hence equally great are her problems. No wonder, therefore, if differences of opinion are also great. And I do not despair, for, why should I get disheartened when there is a pick-axe in my hands?

In the course of a discussion at the Ashram, someone suggested that if wells were sunk at various places in the country, the production would increase and starvation would disappear, and so, Government should take steps in that direction. I said, "We are the Government. Who else is the Government, if not the people? Come, let us take that step and begin to dig a well in our field." The

diggers had no previous experience. But the 'axe did its work. The diggers had no idea of the depth and place of water. But the 'axe had. It went on digging. And lo, soon there appeared water. People of the surrounding parts came to visit our well, and drank its water as they would in a place of pilgrimage.

Then a village Patel said, "When old Koti Baba[1] works on the well, why should not we, too, dig a well?" And be started digging a well in his village. And the young boys of Surgaon did a remarkable thing. They said among themselves, "These are Diwali holidays. Let us go to work on Babaji's well." And without informing us in advance, about a dozen young men came up to us and joined us in the work. They gave us four hours' hard labour, and returned without making any ado. When God raises such divine inspiration in the hearts of the people, why should there be any room for despair? Ramadas has asked, "Where shall I go to beg for my alms?" Shall we go to America? No. Will the people of Independent India stretch out their palms for alms? Come friends, let us worship *Shrama Devata* (the Goddess of Work) and ask her to give us our food. She has always said, "Ask and you will get, seek and you will find."

At least I, for one, see the salvation of India through only this double-edged weapon, namely, freedom from the lure of money and performance of body-labour. In it I see the acme of Gandhiji's philosophy, a synthesis with Communism and an antidote to both Communism and Capitalism.

Paramdham, Paunar, 25-ll-'50 Vinoba

(Translated from the original in Marathi)

1 An aged worker of Paunar, nearly 80 years old.

Gandhi And Marx

I.
Purpose

It has been often said that Gandhiji was a Communist *minus* violence. Indeed, it is possible to quote Gandhiji himself in support of this proposition.[1] Gandhiji was not in the habit of rejecting descriptions of him or his principles, if they were meant as compliments, and if they helped his main mission. But in a careful examination of principles, such descriptions should not be regarded as very accurate and must not be used as handy definitions. The error of such descriptions lies in its capacity to conceal the full implications of the differential factor. When it is said that Gandhism is Communism *minus* violence, the impression created is that the '*minus* violence' factor in Communism is some small impurity the removal of which will make it the same as Gandhism. As a matter of fact, even if it were possible to so equate Gandhism in terms of Communism, the '*minus* violence' factor is a major factor of considerable value. The implications of '*minus* violence' are so great as to make the equation as

1 "Gandhiji has often claimed in the course of his discussions with Communist and Socialist friends that he is a better Communist or Socialist than they. Their goal is identical. The difference in regard to the means and technique employed is however fundamental." ("Gandhiji's Communism" by Pyarelal in *Harijan,* 31-3-'46). Also, "I call myself a Communist also." ("After Four Years" by Pyarelal, *Harijan,* 4-8-'46).

illusory as to say that red is green *minus* yellow and blue, or a worm is a snake *minus* poison.

The temptation to offer such easy explanations arises from a vague awareness that Marxism or Socialism has caught the imagination of the people, who look upon it as offering the right solution for the ills of the world; but that it is too drastic and terrible in its methods, and therefore, Gandhism must be interpreted in terms of Marxism; perhaps also from a latent motive that the introduction of Socialism, desirable as it is ultimately, must not take place at a rapid pace. It is felt that Gandhiji's method somehow provides easy stages for its introduction.

I feel that this is an incorrect position to adopt. It avoids facing fundamental issues, and fails to call the attention of the people to the need of a fundamental revolution in their approach to moral, spiritual and religious dogmas and creeds, from which ultimately all changes in the political, social and economic structure of human society emanate. Thus considered, Gandhism and Marxism are as distinct from each other as green from red, though we know that to the colour-blind even green and red might appear alike.

If, indeed, the difference between Marxism and Gandhism consisted only in the insistence upon non-violence in the latter, and that if the ultimate goal of the Congress or "Gandhi-ites" were the establishment of a socialist order, then the present is the most opportune time for doing so without militarist violence. For, the Government machinery throughout India today is in the hands of those who proclaim Gandhiji as "the Father of the Nation", and constantly invoke his name and refer to his ideas and principles in their public utterances with

commendation. It is in their power to anticipate the Communists and take all the wind out of their sails by carrying out all those changes which Communists would be expected to make, when they come in power. The question of a militarist violent revolution can arise only if the State machinery were not in the hands of the believers in Communist doctrines and if Communists despaired of attaining power by constitutional means. But if the Government itself was pledged to the establishment of Communism, which according to the explanations offered was indistinguishable from Gandhism, Government and Communists should be working hand in hand. If the latter did not and it was a question merely of personal group politics, the people should be able to tell the Communists, "We do not need you and your methods, because we have already established what you advocate."

But this does not happen, and the reason is that the difference between Gandhi and Marx is deeper than what can be expressed by a simple equation with plus and minus signs.

It is necessary to explain this in some detail, and this is the purpose of the following chapters.

II.
Life Alone Is

The fundamental difference between Gandhiji and Marx lies in their different approaches towards life and the universe. All other differences, whether of ends and means or of ideas about political, social, economic, or religious

order, arise from this basic difference. And in this the approach of Gandhiji is different not only from that of Marx but also from that of the protagonists of capitalism and industrialism. For, whatever other differences and conflicts there might be between Marxism and capitalism, there are some important common grounds between them; e.g., both attach great importance to centralized control over capital and land and to industries and agriculture on large scale. Both believe in money economy. The quarrel between them consists in each wanting to establish its own control over these and each desiring to get the largest share in the fruits.

When a road branches itself into two, even if the angle between the two branches is less than five degrees at the base, after some miles, their ends will be away from each other by several miles. If the branching takes place, say, at Kanya Kumari (Cape Comorin), one road might lead you to Peshawar and the other to Nepal. Similarly the difference between the way of looking at life and the universe of Gandhiji and that of Marx and several others appears up to a certain stage to be so much alike for practical purposes as to make one feel that the difference is as between half a dozen and six.[1] This is the reason for apparent similarities in the objectives of Gandhi and Marx, and for slogans, such as, "Gandhism is Communism *minus* violence." But these similarities are limited to some of the targets of the economic order only. The differences become pronounced as you proceed to work them out.

The common point between Gandhi and Marx is

1 See appendix IV.

the extreme concern of both for the suppressed and the oppressed, the resourceless and the ignorant, the dumb and the starving section of humanity. They form the major part of the family.[1] And their condition is wretched in a world which is abundantly full and capable of providing a larger measure of happiness to each and every one. Further, it is wretched in the midst of several successive civilizations, which have again and again developed literature, science, art, industries, orderly governments, majestic institutions, cities and buildings, have delved into the mysteries of nature to an amazing degree and created comforts and luxuries such as were once regarded as available only in fairy lands. Both Gandhi and Marx want to establish an order, which would make these masses co-sharers in the gifts of nature and fruits of human labour and genius. But while Gandhiji insists upon adherence to truth and non-violence for achieving this object, Marx (or Marxists, if as some say, Marx must be distinguished from Marxists, as Gandhi from Gandhi-ites)[2] does not care about the quality of the

1 "Let no one try to justify the glaring differences between the classes and the masses, the prince and the pauper, by saying that the former need more. That will be idle sophistry and a travesty of my argument," he continued. "The contrast between the rich and the poor today is a painful sight. The poor villagers are exploited by the foreign government and also by their countrymen — the city-dwellers. They produce the food and go hungry. They produce milk and their children have to go without it. It is disgraceful. Everyone must have a balanced diet, a decent house to live in, facilities for the education of one's children and adequate medical relief." ("Gandhiji's Communism", *Harijan,* 31-3-'46).

2 cf. Louis Fischer: "The Communists have corrupted the Marxist teaching to suit their purpose." Gandhiji: "What about Lenin?" Fischer: "Lenin started it. Stalin has since completed

means, provided they appear efficient enough for achieving the end as quickly as possible.

The question naturally arises why two highly intelligent and highly cultured men inspired by a common high object should differ on a matter which is of vital importance to the human family taken as a whole. Whether one is able or not to trace the right cause for the difference of opinion, the fact itself must be taken as indicative of the existence of a very serious flaw either in the logic or in the truth of the premises assumed by the one or the other, perhaps, both.

For centuries, philosophers and scientists have sought to get at the primary root of the universe. In outward appearance it is a mixture or combination of innumerable sentient and insentient bodies. How many of these bodies or their scientifically distinguishable components are primordial in their ultimate analysis? Are the components several? or only two, namely life (or spirit) and matter? or, not even two, but only one? If one, which is it—life or matter? And even if life is accepted as the primordial substance, whether there are several independent and eternal individuals, or whether all life is One?

It is difficult to say whether philosophers and scientists will ever come to a final and unanimous conclusion on these points. And it would not matter in the least if there were as many theories about them as the number of thinkers, provided they remained confined to academies as subjects for intellectual treat with no bearing on the problems of life. But it is not so. Each theory is sought to be applied to the dealings and institutions of man in everyday life. The acceptance of one theory demands the

it." ("After Four Years" in *Harijan,* 4-8-'46).

ordering of society and the place of the individual in it in one manner, of another theory in quite a different manner; and so on with every separate theory.

Progress in science may bring about a reduction in the number of such theories. But, as yet, even science, after a certain limit, is, merely enunciation of hypotheses and conjectures about probabilities. The exact link between life and matter is still beyond human perception even with the aid of scientific appliances. But the stubbornness in man is such that he is not satisfied with merely accepting one's own theory as cent per cent truth for himself, but it impels him to bring about changes in the world in accordance with the corollaries arising from that theory. And in doing so, he does not hesitate to use, if needed, every type of foul means.

Of these philosophies, there are two which regard the apparently different life and matter to be emanations of only one fundamental principle. Both Gandhi and Marx might be regarded as monobasists. But according to Gandhiji the basic principle is life and not matter. Even what we perceive as insentient matter has its being in and by life; it has no existence independent of it; at any rate, in the absence of life none can testify to its existence. The universe rises, exists and disappears in Life, which alone is, i.e. ever existent and imperishable. Therefore Life alone is *Satya* — Truth — the ever-abiding principle. All other forms and forces are, so to say, rays or emanations from it; every one of them is subject to continuous change and total conversion or resolution from one form into one or more others. And the mystery of life is that though every sentient being is always associated with it and is never away from it, it is missed by most beings

for the whole of their lives. And this is to such an extent that its very existence is doubted by many, and even most of those who accept it do so on faith.

Just as a drop of water is as completely water itself as an ocean, so life is as completely existent in a small bacterium as in the mighty lion, the huge elephant or the greatest genius. In spite of infinite varieties and degrees in the manifestation of its powers, the ultimate base is one and even in all. Even as one may not perceive the strength of a sleeping lion though it is there in abundance, so too life is wholly and fully present in every atom, whether its powers are manifest or hidden. And its wonder is that though every individual life feels itself to be a separate, self-contained and independent ego, it is not many, nor a few, but only one common *Atma*—Soul, Spirit—in all. The tiniest cell is not a different spirit from the biggest monster, nor the greatest sinner different from the greatest *mahatma,* prophet or *avatara.* Even as coal and diamond, though so very different from each other in colour, lustre, hardness and various other qualities, are but different manifestations of the same element called carbon, so too the different sentient beings are one Universal Spirit. We may not be able to delve into the mystery of their differences, not even into the mystery of the workings of one's own mind and personality. But for Gandhiji, in common with the great seers of the world, there was no room for doubt that ultimately it is all one life, and it alone works everywhere. The universe composed of infinite sentient and insentient bodies, visible and invisible energies, good and wicked, moral and spiritual qualities, and micro-cosmic and macro-cosmic objects is one, and only one, ever-abiding Life,—also called *Satya*

(Truth), *Atma* (Soul), *Paramatma* (God). The different forms are only apparent and superficial coverings. They emanate from its capacity to manifest itself in infinite ways. Looked at from that side, there is no scope for dividing existence into I, you and the rest.

This was, as I understood it, Gandhiji's attitude towards life and the universe.

But Gandhiji's is not the only *ism* which accepts the doctrine "God or Life alone is". There are other *isms* also which do it, and on the authority of those very scriptures (the *Gita*, the *Upanishads* etc.), which Gandhiji accepted as authoritative. But curious though it may seem, the lessons which they draw from this philosophy are the opposite of those which Gandhiji did. These enable-them to reconcile reasoning and acts similar to the principles and methods of the Communists in some respects.

The lesson which Gandhiji draws from his faith that the whole universe—sentient as well as insentient—is manifestation of one life may be stated thus:

"When all life is one, and the whole universe including myself is a manifestation of God, how may I regard any one to be my enemy, a wicked being, one whom I am free to hate? How may I feel afraid of or inspire fear in any one? How may I regard one as closer to me than others? How may I hold any one as trivial enough to be sacrificed by me for an end?

"Although in truth my being is His, a mysterious law of His binds me with my body with such attachment that I cannot absolutely give up a desire to keep it fit and alive. I do not commit suicide or regard it as proper, in spite of evil in myself. How then may I regard another as one

deserving to be killed, because of evil in him?

"The fact is that it is by faith that I hold that the universe is a manifestation of God, and that apart from Him I am nothing. But I have not actually attained that stage. I am yet not free from passion, prejudice, violence, discriminatory attachments etc. Consciously or unconsciously, my acts reveal my real condition. But since my faith is firm that Truth is as I believe it to be, my incessant effort must be to reach a condition consistent with my faith. This is possible only if I accept non-violence as the supreme *dharma* (law) of my life and regulate all my thoughts, words and actions in accordance with that law. All such pledges, rules of conduct and duties, as would fulfil the law of non-violence, must be sought out and diligently followed. If I allow myself freedom to kill or punish others for their wickedness, or for obstructing my aims, objects and efforts, the statement that all life is one remains a futile academical dissertation on my part."

As stated above there are others also who regard the universe as the manifestation of One Life or *Atma*. But they do not deduce the same lessons from the doctrine, but allow to themselves the right to destroy, punish or otherwise forcibly restrain all those 'evildoers' who go by the 'wrong path', harass the 'righteous', spread 'false doctrines' etc., and hold that for proper reasons the duty to inflict violence is as imperative as the duty to love. Such *proper reasons* might arise from differences of stages of evolution, number of individuals involved, their caste, creed, country, race, wealth and other differential factors. Herein lies the difference between Gandhiji and other accepters of the doctrine of 'God alone Is'.

III.
Marxism

I shall now state the basic principles of Marxism as I have understood them. In this connection, the reader will pardon me if at any place I have made a confusion between Marx and Marxism, or later interpretations of the Marxian doctrine. For I do not write with a scholar's knowledge of the subject.

As stated previously Marx is a monobasist like Gandhiji and the *Advaita Vedantins*. But according to Marx the basic principle is inert Matter and not Life or *Atma*. He holds that there is no evidence for believing that matter has its rise from, existence in, and return to an eternal substance called the Spirit and that without it the former could not exist. On the contrary, the observed facts of the universe and the history of evolution show that for millions and millions of years life did not exist upon our earth; that out of the billions of heavenly bodies known to astronomers, it is doubtful if it exists in any form anywhere except on this earth. Science traces pretty accurately in what form life first appeared on this earth, how it evolved at different stages and got transformed into millions of types of living organisms, from the most simple cell to the hugest animal and tree, until, at last, man, its highest development in existence at present, appeared on the scene. On the basis of the study of science and history, one can safely assert that even when life was not, matter was; one cannot say with equal confidence that there was life when matter was not. Hence it is life which

has its birth, sustenance and dissolution in matter and not vice versa. What is imagined to be the Spirit or Soul, — that is, the capacity to cognize, think, feel, remember, etc., — is as much a development, arrangement and interaction of material forces as a complicated man-made mechanism, like a robot, or an air-plane which propels itself to an aimed target by a scientifically planned combination of the several energies known to physicists and chemists. There is no more spiritual principle in the one than in the other. From the smallest single cell to the most developed human being, ultimately it is all a congregation of matter and material energies, systematized and regimented to act in a particular manner. The thinking process is a type of record-making and record-reading produced by the interaction of a series of fine movements in the body. This is possible as long as the body machine is in order. If for any reason the body machine goes wrong it cannot do so, even as a radio set cannot produce any sound if it has got into disorder. There is no more departure of a soul or the spirit from the body when it breaks, than there is any departure of it from a radio set, when it is hopelessly spoilt. Virtue or morality (truth, non-violence, righteousness etc.) and sin or immorality (falsehood, violence, malevolence etc.) are mere inhibitions and man-made taboos, and killing, torturing, cheating etc. have no more intrinsic spiritual significance than what is involved in the demolition of a natural hillock or the destruction or alteration of a man-made object. Objects are produced and maintained with a purpose and can be destroyed and altered for a purpose. The same principle applies whether they are animate or inanimate.

Since the time life took the form of man, this species

has made a wonderful history of its own. A close study of the various stages of man's evolution enables us to know the main direction in which he and his social institutions will develop in the future. The progress and passage of man through certain definite phases is inevitable. There is a set order of such phases which it cannot escape from or leap over. Whether man willingly co-operates with nature or obstinately opposes it, the march of progress in a definite order is determined. This is called Determinism in Marxian philosophy. (यदभाविन तद्भावि। भावि चेन्न तदन्यथा।) What is not to happen, will not happen, and what is to happen is bound to happen. Of course, this has to be taken in a broad context. It does not mean that every event in human society is predestined, but it posits that when humanity has attained a particular stage in economic progress, its next attempt will run along a definite line in the main. To this extent, its course is destined, and efforts to change its course are futile. The wise, therefore, should help the destiny to fulfil itself completely and speedily by their willing co-operative drive, so that the stage for the next phase of evolution might set well. This faith in Determinism is a strong motive-power behind the activities of the Marxists. They believe that they help the course of nature, and thus fulfil its law.

The next marked phase for human society is, according to Marxism, the end of capitalism and the rise to power of the proletariat. The latter is marked out by nature as the agency for accomplishing the overthrow and suppression of the capitalist system. And attempts to put obstructions in the course are doomed to failure.

Not until the dictatorship of the proletariat is fully

established and has attained its full stature, will human society be classless and ready for enjoying peace, equality and freedom from war and violence. After Communism is established in the world, there will be no classes and class-conflicts, no private property in the means of production and no room for profiteering. Hence, there will be no need for violence also, and so non-violence will come in a natural way. There will also be no need for complicated machinery of government, and the time will arrive for the birth of the state of ideal anarchy, which Gandhiji, in common with other idealists, dreamt of.

Discerning men must exert to help nature to fulfil itself. In nature, it is only the end which counts, not the means. So the distinction between so-called fair and foul means is unphilosophical. The means must be examined only for their effectiveness for achieving the end in view. Those who resist the destined course of evolution, whether ignorantly, foolishly or selfishly, must be removed from the way.

This necessitates a revolution. A nationwide general strike is the most potent weapon to accomplish a revolution in a capitalistic economic order.

Religion and ethics are partly folly and partly deliberate means of confounding simple people. Under their camouflage are concealed weapons of exploiting the masses. They are opiates to dull the people's power to think and act for themselves, and an attractive outer skin to hide one's selfishness.

Gandhiji's emphasis on God and Religion helped the feudal and capitalist rulers, and his emphasis on non-violence and praise of ideal anarchy misdirected

the people in the immediate task before them, namely the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Moreover, his philosophy of opposition to industrialism and return to the *charkha* and village industries was a negation of progress and a reactionary rejection of the achievements of science. Since the world will not go back, Gandhiji was a failure himself and Gandhism is bound to fail.

Thus according to Marxists, Gandhism is incompatible with Communism. It is also incomparable with it, because of its emphasis on non-violence, which is a distant stage, and its recognition of the irrational belief in God and Religion, — the shield of the feudal and capitalistic orders. The truth according to Marxist theory is: Since the ultimate sanction of government is force, there can be neither a revolution nor a government, without resorting to force, which may have to take the form of even violence; and without revolution and the power of the State, Communism cannot be established. So Communism will have to be brought about by establishing a dictatorial State of the proletariat through a violent revolution.

I hope this will be accepted as a fair representation of the Marxist doctrine. I shall now try to elucidate the Gandhian position, *vis-a-vis* this.

IV.
The Basis of Ethics

The reader knows that even some schools of spiritual philosophy justify the employment of untruth, violence and other foul means for achieving an end. On the other hand there are materialist and atheist schools of thought, which regard morality as untrans-gressable and insist upon purity of means. Thus the main question, namely, what is the true basis for the ethics of truth, non-violence etc., remains unsolved.

Let us leave aside for the moment all metaphysical discussions about life and matter, and look at both the world and ourselves as we perceive them with our senses. It is a world in which life (i.e. sentient creation) is always found in closest association with matter (i.e. insentient elements). Mankind is one type of such life-cum-matter bodies. It is spread all over the world. A few ethnological varieties of it are easily distinguished. These are again sub-divided into various secondary types as a result of a multiplicity of causes whether hereditary, congenital, or environmental. This has led to the formation of big or small distinct groups or societies. Some of them are centuries old. Common features hold the individuals of such groups together and impel them to work together for achieving common purposes. The differences between one group and another are often so bewildering that one is apt to think that mankind is not a single species, but several distinct, and mutually incompatible and immiscible ones.

But experience, experiment and history show that these apparent distinctions are only superficial, and that underneath them are certain attributes and features of evolution, which are common to all mankind. The course of their evolution and devolution is common not only to all races and groups, but even to individuals. For instance, the ethnological differences of colour, hair, cheek-bone etc., in human beings are less serious impediments to their inter-breeding than similar differences in the various breeds of cows. Also the story of the growth and decay of their moral and intellectual faculties and of the order of evolution and devolution of and reactions to benevolent and malevolent acts is similar everywhere. Every race and group has produced and is capable of producing men and women of very noble, talented and heroic types as well as their opposites. With suitable opportunities, every group may establish a powerful kingdom and a great culture and make the fullest use of the scientific knowledge then available. They may all attain to great heights in moral and intellectual qualities, and may all in course of time lapse into luxury and vice, and bring about decay and destruction of their particular civilization.

Eminent scientists and thinkers have examined the order and history of the growth and decay of various human groups from various angles, such as, of ethnology, language, religion, political rule, social and economic institutions, literature, music, painting, sculpture etc. Since society has a longer life than its individuals, and since the latter's attainments and defects are transmitted to the survivors either through heredity or association, some have attached greater importance to society than to the

individual, regarding the latter as no more than a leg of a centipede, a few of which may be sacrificed by it to save its life. On the other hand, some attach more importance to the growth and development of the individual, because society exists and evolves through and for its individuals and has no existence or purpose apart from its individuals. All these studies reveal that no scholar is capable of looking at life from every angle. The best of them is able to look at only a minute phase thereof, and draw inferences about the whole from that limited experience. And yet several of them feel dogmatically certain about their conclusions, and regard all those who do not accept them as ignorant, mistaken or wilfully false and wicked, whom they feel it to be their right and bounden duty to suppress or destroy. However valuable the knowledge of the learned may be, it must always be remembered that it is after all perfunctory and partial.[1] The conclusions

1 Dr. Alexis Carrel, one of the foremost scientists and bold thinkers of the modern times and a Nobel Prize winner writes in his famous book, *Man, The Unknown*:

"The science of the living beings in general, and especially of the human individual, has not made such great progress. It still remains in the descriptive state... In fact, our ignorance is profound. Most of the questions put to themselves by those who study human beings remain without answer. Immense regions of our inner world are still unknown... Without any doubt, certain physiological and mental factors determine happiness or misery, success or failure. But we do not know what they are. We cannot artificially give to any individual the aptitude for happiness. As yet, we do not know what environment is the most favourable for the optimum development of civilized man...It is quite evident that the accomplishment of all sciences having man as an object remain insufficient, and that our knowledge of ourselves is still

have to be justified and proved both in their physical and moral effects by one's own direct observation and experience. None can deny the conclusions of science and history, to the extent they are proved on the touchstone of experience, which is more important and basic than the studies. There is little room for difference of opinion on common realizations of experience. Differences arise only over that part which is inferential, conjectural, based on analogies, or suggestive of probabilities.

The examination of human life as it is shows that the line of human progress in its upward course proceeds from ignorance to knowledge; from dependence to self-reliance; from a state of poverty and power-lessness to that of plenty and power; from evanescence and short life to permanence and longevity, even immortality; from despair to hope. Also none on the line desires to be deceived and kept in ignorance of truth; to be hated by or live in fear of others; or willingly to put up with injustice, coercion etc. Everyone wants to know the truth of a matter, to be loved and esteemed by others, to be treated justly and kindly and to be free from fear.

Again the experience of life is that the relation of the individual to his society is that of a receiver (i.e. selfish) during the stage of his childhood and unenlightenment, and the extent of his society varies from his family to a narrow group, the nation or the whole creation according to his circumstances and enlightenment as well as according to those of his surroundings. He regards the society in which he lives as existing for his sake and uses it as a means for achieving his own ends. In a semi-

most rudimentary."

advanced stage the relationship grows into one of mutual deal. The individual and society accommodate and serve each other according to exigencies and try to grow by mutual give and take. None thinks that one is absolutely meant for the other and may be sacrificed or exploited for one's own ends. But on certain occasions, the individual willingly sacrifices himself for society and on certain others, society makes sacrifices for maintaining and developing the individual. Thus for instance, the whole family spends itself out for the recovery or education of a child, or a single earning member for maintaining a great number of dependents. None takes this as anything but a natural act for a man to do. So too in relation with the community, with the nation, with humanity and with creation, in general. Normally there is not even the consciousness of having performed a duty. It is as natural a conduct as assisting one's own child in crossing a street. The unhealthy awareness of regarding such conduct as an act of sacrifice arises only when there are indications of selfish and ungrateful behaviour on the other side. If the behaviour is normal the occasion for making a sacrifice is not a matter of heart-burning or mental dissatisfaction. It is just an act which is expected of any human being towards any other. The reason is that in the line of progress the development of the capacity to give is on a higher level than the stage in which one is a constant receiver.

As development proceeds further, the urge to give and serve the weak and to help them to be strong, self-reliant and prosperous becomes more intense. If a sacrifice is necessary either for a person's own good, or for a common good, or even for a noble purpose, it is not the weak who

are to be sacrificed, but the strong ones. If people are to be rescued from a sinking steamer, it is the women, the children and the infirm who are to be helped out first, not the able-bodied men. Where the weak, the dependent and the backward parts are sacrificed for a seeming good; it is exploitation.[1] In the course of its growth the human mind feels a sense of satisfaction in advancing towards a life of renunciation of the fruits of prosperity from that of enjoyment thereof. He who desires to be a protector and a guardian of the weak finds renouncement of comforts and luxuries as elevating and indispensable. Lordship ओश्वरत्व consists in the capacity to protect and renounce, not in the display of plenty and enjoyment of luxuries.

Also the human mind, to the extent it is evolved at present, presents certain unmistakable features as characteristics of the form of energy known as mind. Some of these are memory, will, desire, control (of memory and desire), discrimination, sentiment and faith. All the rules, conventions and ideas about morality, good conduct, rights and duties of men, as also religious, political, economic and other systems which man has founded or destroyed are the result of the growth or decline of these common characteristics of the mind; and these characteristics are the basis on which ethics is founded.

Thus ethics stands on direct experience and is independent of metaphysical dissertation on *Atma* and matter. Individuals and groups of men in their undeveloped

1 "My socialism means 'Even Unto This Last'. I do not want to rise on the ashes of the blind, the deaf and the dumb. In their socialism, probably these have no place..."—Gandhiji. ("After Four Years", *Harijan,* 4-8-'46)

or underdeveloped stage of physical or mental childhood have to be receivers; as such they will tend towards selfishness and even resort to falsehood, violence, vice, corruption etc., to achieve their ends. That they behave so, as if in a natural way, and cannot restrain themselves, and may even have to be excused for doing so, does not mean that such behaviour is *dharma* or lawful, i.e. right for man. The function of *dharma* or law is to lay down what is right for man to do; and this can be only to act with the highest dictates of discrimination, knowledge and benevolence, i.e. with progressive adherence to truth, non-violence, self-control, renunciation etc.

It may be said without fear of contradiction that the human mind is the highest development of sentient organisms in the world known to us. In Western philosophies, and in common parlance also in Indian ones, no distinction is made between mind and the soul or spirit. The highest and noblest individuals which mankind has produced show to what height mind or spirit is capable of rising in its course of evolution.

Thus, ethics by itself may not require a spiritual basis to justify it. But it is the strength of the Spirit, *Atma* or God which keeps a person on the right line at a critical moment, sustains him in periods of disappointment and dejection, enables him to fight against odds, and saves him from getting elated with success or intoxicated with power. Even with the deepest conviction that he has no existence or individuality apart from *Atma,* he does not regard himself as the centre and fulcrum of the universe or vainly think that the world will go to ruin after him.

God or soul is not an imaginary concept or a hypothesis

formulated for a purpose. To the most earnest and perseverant seeker, the faith in *Atma* is a conviction born of deep plunges into the depths of the mind and beyond it, and is as much a conclusion based on introspection, observation and thinking as any other truth of science. But such earnest and perseverant search is rather rare and a majority of devout and earnest people accept and build up a faith, which comes very near to conviction. But I must leave this side of the discussion at that and proceed to other aspects of the main topic.

V.
Human Progress and Decay

We are often told that you cannot go back upon the progress which man has made in the realms of general knowledge, science, industry, art, technology etc., and return to a past age. The advice is partly good, partly out of place, and to the extent it is good, it applies to non-material and intangible progress also.

By its very nature, the world is so made that you cannot return to the same place again. Seasons appear to return year after year; the sun, the moon and the planets seem associated with the same stars again and again. We do speak of their revolutionary cycles and even exactly declare where a particular heavenly body would apparently be at a particular moment. But the path of progress is of the nature of an extremely complicated endless spiral, wherein though the face turns in the same direction again and again, neither the looker nor the object looked at is ever

in the same place. Therefore the apprehension that you might return to the "primitive or middle ages" of the past is as groundless as the desire to return to the "golden age" of the past is futile. A higher civilization, i.e. a particular society of human beings might decay and degenerate, and be overrun and destroyed by one which is still low, but mankind will never return to its own past.

Secondly, if one cannot consent to go back in the realm of material sciences, can one do so in the sphere of spiritual and moral development of the human race? Can we disregard the progress made by man, age after age, in the spiritual, moral, intellectual and mental spheres, which made it possible for humanity to produce men like Socrates, Buddha, Confucius, Jesus, Gandhi and others who stand like light-houses to others for centuries, and who in their own selves show a point higher than the one preceding?

Winwood Reade, an atheist in the ordinary sense, but a great humanitarian, says in his book *The Martyrdom of Man*:

> "The desire to do good which arose in necessity, which was developed by the hopes of a heavenly reward, is now an instinct of the human race.... There will always be enthusiasts for virtue as there are now, men who adorn and purify their souls before the mirror of their conscience, and who strive to attain an ideal excellence in their actions and their thoughts."

Identifying himself with this class, he thus expounds the form of his 'Virtue-religion' and the discipline for attaining it:

"To develop to the utmost our genius and our love, that

is the only true religion. To do that which deserves to be written, to write that which deserves to be read, to tend the sick, to comfort the sorrowful, to animate the weary, to keep the temple of the body pure, to cherish the divinity within us, to be faithful to the intellect, to educate those powers which have been entrusted to our charge and to employ them in the service of humanity, that is all that we can do. Our religion therefore is Virtue, our Hope is placed in the happiness of our posterity; our Faith is the Perfectibility of Man. Love, not Fear, will unite the human race...With one faith, with one desire, they will labour together in the Sacred Cause—the extinction of disease, the extinction of sin, the perfection of genius, the perfection of love, the invention of immortality, the exploration of the infinite, the conquest of creation.

"All men cannot be poets, inventors, or philanthropists; but all men can join in the gigantic and Godlike work of the progress of creation. Whosoever improves his own nature, improves the universe of which he is a part. He who strives to subdue his evil passions, vile remnants of the old four-footed life and who cultivates the social affections; he who endeavours to better his conditions and to make his children wiser and happier than himself; whatever may be his motives, he will not have lived in vain...But this condition is not to be easily attained...Virtue in its purest and most exalted form can only be acquired by means of severe and long continued culture of the mind."

Man has often appeared to have gone forward and backward in the course of his evolution. He has also

often erred, and has had to count over and over again. He has often tried to undo what had been done once deliberately and to restore the status *quo* as nearly as possible. For instance, in the realm of political institutions he has not settled down to any one form as yet. Absolute monarchy (dictatorship), limited or constitutional monarchy, oligarchy, democracy, republican State, unitary government, federal government are forms which have been tried in a variety of shades again and again, and may again be tried in the future. The historian does not look into the apparent forms of these governments and the temporary advances and set-backs in them, but examines the state of political thought behind every such experiment, and the extent of humanity influenced by it. It is on this that he assesses the civilization of that period.

Marx examined the political and other institutions of the world from the standpoint that they were moulded mainly, if not wholly, by the economic conditions and institutions of the time, and came to the conclusion that with the passage of time political power will ultimately pass into the hands of the proletariat (workers), and there will be no privileged class of people in the State. Hence, he concludes, it is the duty of discerning men to help that transformation.

This might be true. But this does not mean that it is the whole truth, and, that, even if it be so it may be brought about by any means whatsoever. The spiritual and moral progress made by man during all these centuries must also be borne in mind in achieving the end. And this progress should be properly assessed. If Gandhiji showed the climax of moral perfection of the present age, the next

great man of the world will have to show a still higher stage of perfection. If determinism has any value, this may be taken as the next destined goal of humanity, and if it be true, as the Marxist believes, that an individual man is nothing more than a small bee working itself out, even unto death, for the perfection of the beehive and its queen, he must so work that it may be possible for humanity to produce a man greater than Gandhi at the next stage, and within a shorter period than humanity has taken hitherto. It must be remembered that only thousands of individual strugglers for moral perfection could have made it possible for a Gandhi to be born; tens of thousands of similar strugglers are necessary to produce *one still greater* than him. Hitler might have excelled all the great conquerors and despots of the past. Even super-Hitlers might reappear in the world. But they too are born as a result of thousands of smaller adventurers of the same type. But the development of this feature cannot be the right goal of humanity.

The moral goal is as important and inevitable as the economic and political goal. Rather, if a choice has to be made between the two, the former must be regarded as the more important one. Any attempt to disregard it will fail to bring about the attainment of even the material goal. It will either be not achieved at all or even if seemingly achieved will bring no peace and prosperity to the people on whose behalf it is attempted. We see with our own eyes, how the neglect of the moral emphasis of Gandhiji is responsible for absence of peace and prosperity in our country in spite of independence. It will be the same after the establishment of Communism.

It is also a partial truth to say that it is wrong to give up a line of progress once traversed. Progress is not synonymous with breaking a past record irrespective of its moral value and utility. Such a theory can lead us only to the ever-increasing perfection of destructive weapons and demons in human form. The next war would have to be more extensive, total and terrible and to be directed by more inhuman generals than the last one. Progress would consist in destroying a larger part of humanity than hitherto.

Indeed there do exist people who believe so; nor is it impossible that the appearance of such events and monsters might occur in the future. But it will be progress not towards further development but towards decay and destruction of civilization and mankind. If a conscious effort is to be made, it should be to prevent it, never to hasten it.

VI.
The Rise and Fall of Classes

The difference between the philosophies of Gandhiji and Marx manifests itself in their political and economic ideas. Marx puts forth the theories of class-war and its end through the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, expropriation of land, mines and other material sources of wealth, State capitalism,[1] nationalization of industries,

1 A critic of Marxist persuasion objects to my associating the theory of State capitalism with Marxism. It will be best to explain what I mean to convey by that word: so far as my information

and regimentation of life and labour.[1] As against this the Gandhian theories are those of *varna-dharma* (or goes, in Russia also, money is the meter by which both tangible and intangible wealth and labour is measured and remunerated. Work is not remunerated only according to the amount of work done, or (where it is not possible to ascertain it at once) according to the time for which the worker has rendered service, but also according to the intellectual quality of the work. Thus, the remunerations of an investigating expert, a working engineer, a manager and an ordinary workman are almost as widely different as in a capitalist country.

Secondly, articles are priced not only in accordance with their cost of production, but if of two articles of the same kind, one is more attractive and in greater demand than the other, it is priced higher, even though it gives the same amount of service and comfort and has cost the same labour and materials in producing it. That is to say, man's partiality or weakness for a fashion is exploited. Thirdly, differences in remuneration necessarily lead to, on the one hand, different standards of living and, on the other employment of inducements to make the people save from their earnings for the purposes of the State. Hence, the resort to all those methods of investments for earning interest which Capitalist governments have employed. The Government being the only institution entitled to borrow in this manner, I have called it State Capitalism. If technically that word is used in a different sense, this note may be taken as explanatory.

1 "Every unbiased person who studies the recent history of Russia will admit that a true democracy which cedes to every person the right to order his life in its completeness, to determine his aims and to strive towards them in the way that seems good to him, does not exist in that country; that in Russia the State counts for more and more and the human person and the development of his personality for less and less; that the individual person exists for the good of the State and not the State for the fulfilment of the personalities of the people who compose it."—Wilfred Wellock, *The Third Way,* p. 10.

performance of class duties), *Satyagraha* and arbitration, decentralization, trusteeship and as much individual liberty and democratization as possible in social life.

A careful examination of the theory of class-war will show that until the moral and psychological change on which Gandhiji lays stress takes place, the solution suggested by Marx to put an end to it will fail to achieve its end of establishing a classless society. It is like murdering or dethroning a king and placing the murderer in his place under the title of President, and calling the change a 'revolution'. Ultimately the net result will be no more than a change of hands. A few changes and improvements in the system and order of life might take place in the beginning, but after a brief period it will be found that there is no permanent and substantial change in human relations except to the extent to which there has been a general rise in the moral character of the people. A new ruler and his aristocracy, a new staff of officials, a new set of favourites and a new section of the middle class will replace the old. The mutual relations among them on the one hand, and between them all and the toiling masses on the other, will be very much the same as those existing before the 'revolution'. Under new designations the authoritarian power of the ruler and his council, the military power of the actual commander of the forces, the controlling power of the actual possessor and manager of land and wealth, the technical power of the expert and the power of physical work of the labourer will continue as before, establishing the same class divisions and giving rise to similar conflicts of interests as before. If the Tsar's rule had become tyrannical and absolute and could be put an end to only by violence, a particular

Dictatorship of the Proletariat on becoming unbearably so, would have to be liquidated by the same method. There is no guarantee that the industrial workers' dictatorship may not become a caste of as tyrannical, imperialist and intriguing exploiters as that of the Tsar and his nobles or the capitalists. A true classless society is possible only if there is almost no permanent division of functions, and all people take part in almost every act necessary for life. But in a complicated society, such as we live in, it does not seem possible even with a decentralized economy, to have a state of classlessness. What can be achieved as best as possible is class-harmony. And this is possible only to the extent men and women have become good, truthful, loving, simple, self-controlled, respecters of life, anxious to serve and make happy the people over whom they exercise authority and honest workers of their respective callings and functions in society. In a society of such men there will be all-round prosperity, peace and harmony and absence or minimum of conflicts and disputes. The essential conditions of happiness are: (i) That men are moved with a sense of duty in their various functions and not by the motives of profit, pleasure, or fulfilment of ambition; and (ii) that they regard themselves as trustees of that which is vested in them, whether it be property, authority, office, learning, technical knowledge, muscular energy, or guardianship of children, invalids, prisoners or other dependents. Then they will render an honest account of their stewardship, not exploit their position of vantage for selfish purposes, and take no more reward out of it than what is consistent with the ideal of a real classless society, where everyone gives to the best of his capacity and takes no more than what is both

just and necessary for his own maintenance consistently with the means of society.

If these two conditions are fulfilled the external form of political, social and economic order of a society is not of the utmost importance for making the system beneficial to the people. An apparent monarchy and capitalist society might happen to be better than an apparent rule of elected *Panchayats,* nationalization of agriculture and industries and controlled distribution. Neither the first nor the second is an end by itself. It is of importance only to the extent of creating a helpful environment for raising the character of the people. Gandhiji concerned himself more with the basic factors, and less with the apparent forms of government and organizations. Marxism, on the other hand, holds

> "It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness." (Karl Marx, quoted by Stalin in the book referred to below).
>
> "Hence, in order not to err in policy, in order not to find itself in the position of idle dreamers, the party of the proletariat must not base its activities on abstract 'principles of human reason', but on the concrete conditions of the material life of society, as the determining force of social development; not on the good wishes of 'great men', but on the real needs of development of the material life of society." (Stalin: *Dialectical and Historical Materialism,* p. 16, Eng. ed., Moscow, 1949.)

A young worker, who after eight years of active association with Communists has recoiled from it, recently spoke to me to the following effect:

"I turned back from Marx, because I found that he holds class-war, i.e. conflict between two opposite interests or forces as an essential condition of evolution. Apart from the fact that this theory of evolution has been exploded by modern science, it means that according to Marx the cult of hatred is essential for propagating class-war. Since hatred is a passion—a mental deformity—and not a perfect development of reason and sentiments, his doctrine is based on and requires deformation of the mind for its success. Can such doctrine ever be a philosophic or scientific 'ism'? Moreover, it is impossible for a human being to forget his or her human instinct of love for the whole of his life and live on a diet of hatred. No one can remain a demon till the end of his life. I am therefore, surprised when those who speak of *Sarvodaya* try to put their ideas in conformity with Communism, and speak of nationalization of industries, establishment of classless society etc., but seem to have lost sight of the principles of trusteeship and *varna-dharma,* which Gandhiji laid emphasis upon. I wonder if they have fully grasped the implications of the principles of *Sarvodaya.*"[1]

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1 A friend comments thus about the above:

"So far as I have seen (the Marxian literature), Marx never preached hatred in any form. The expression he used in German has been translated as 'class-antagonism'. Antagonism is an average human reaction. At any rate it is not hatred. Of course, like all revolutionary thinkers Marx made many extreme statements. But for them he can no more be accused of preaching hatred and vengeance than Jesus can be accused of contemplating violence because he said, 'I come with a sword'; or of vengeance, because he denounced some people as, 'Ye! generation of vipers!' But the

I think that the young man's remarks deserve careful consideration.

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young man's reactions might perhaps serve as an index to the muddleheadedness prevailing among the Indian Communists."

It is possible that this may be so. But, as I have said in Ch. II, by Marx or Marxism I must be understood to mean mainly the view of Indian Communists as disclosed by their acts and utterances, whether supported by Marx himself or not. Moreover, the difference between antagonism and hatred is that between the thin and the thick edges of a wedge. The former makes way for the entry of the latter.

The fundamental point is this: In a complicated society, classes are bound to exist and arise on account of the different functions, which the society needs to be performed. If these functions are properly correlated and co-ordinated with one another, the classes, that is the performers of these functions,—will generally work in harmony; otherwise, they will come into mutual conflict. If the eyes, hands and legs of a cyclist do not work in coordination, the rider will fall, and injure himself, his machine and possibly someone else also. This is a case of conflict, antagonism, in the organs of an individual. If men and women do not work in mutual co-ordination, but one sex tries to dominate the other, sexual antagonisms and conflicts will follow. We cannot do away with the different organs of a person and make him organless. We cannot also make the society sexless. We cannot do this though we know that there do exist hundreds of creatures which have a single organ and a single sex. Similarly you cannot do away with class divisions in a modern society, though it is possible to have a simple society in which there are no functional divisions. So whatever antagonism there might exist or develop in future, must be resolved by finding and establishing a suitable co-ordination among them. This is a psychological and a moral problem, in which environment and also removal of some individuals occasionally will also play their part. But it must be realized that it is fundamentally a psychological and moral one.

VII.
Principle of Varna Dharma

All the social and economic ideas and programmes of Gandhiji "sprang from his non-violence". His principles of *varna dharma* and trusteeship are not an exception to this. Neither the individual, nor society, nor, for the matter of that, even non-human life was for him a mere material object like a piece of furniture or a machine, which might be created, altered, destroyed or set to any use at will for a man-conceived purpose. The welfare of the individual himself must be regarded as the most important purpose of all, and if the sacrifice of one's legitimate material good was demanded for any idealistic end, it must be voluntary. He did not subscribe to the theory that for the good of the many that of the few and for the good which might accrue to the future generations, that of the present generation might be sacrificed by men possessed of power.

Nor, so far as I am aware, did Gandhiji ever speak of a 'class war', or put forth the establishment of a 'classless society' as his ideal. He did speak of the abolition of castes to the extent they obstructed inter-dining, inter-marriage and social intercourse; of hierarchy in the caste system, and the differences in the incomes of several callings, as also of persons doing different types of work in the same industry or institution. But the existence of classes in the sense of functional divisions is a permanent feature of any but the most primitive society, and Gandhiji suggested the

solution of their conflicting interests in the two principles of *varna dharma* and trusteeship. The two together, if honestly followed, could maintain harmony in society, and devise non-violent solutions for resolving conflicts as soon as they arose. As long as man remains an imperfect being, one can never imagine a state of absence of conflict altogether. What is needed is a training and a technique to resolve them in a manner which will be beneficial to the individuals, the classes, as well as the society concerned.

What is this principle of *varna dharma*? Deprived of its scriptural and ritual dress, it can be stated as follows:

Normally people follow the traditional callings of their forefathers handed down from father to son. This is good for the stability of social life, for the training of the child and for the technical advance of the profession itself. If the earnings and prestige of every occupation were equal, or even almost so, only in exceptional cases would a person be attracted to a profession other than the ancestral one. This would happen, for instance, if a person was brought up from a very early age in an environment of another occupation. Even if the popular belief that professional skill is a hereditary gift is not accepted as scientifically established, one need not doubt that pathological changes developed during the practice of a profession for a whole lifetime and from generation to generation have a tendency to become hereditary, and this, along with the occupational environment surrounding the child in the home, makes him more fitted for following the ancestral profession than a very different one. Hence the normal law of social life should be that a person must, as a matter of duty, practise for his livelihood the profession of his

forefathers, or of one developed out of the ancestral one. A radical plunge into a different profession is not desirable. If the principle were settled that one must be what his father was so far as the practice of a profession for living was concerned, we would not have the sorry spectacle of the present age, where a person even after becoming a double graduate does not know the profession which he should practise for earning his living. In the settled scheme the training from the very childhood would be a purposeful one. "The meaning of *varna*" says Gandhiji, "is incredibly simple. It simply means the following on the part of us all the hereditary and traditional calling of our forefathers, in so far as the traditional calling is not inconsistent with fundamental ethics, and this only for the purpose of earning one's livelihood." (Young *India*, 20-10-'27).

Gandhiji lays down here one exception to the normal rule; namely, if the traditional calling is inconsistent with fundamental ethics, it is not to be followed. He also lays down a limitation of the normal rule by saying, that the pursuit of the traditional profession is "only for the purpose of earning one's livelihood."

He was also prepared to admit another exception to the normal rule when he said in answer to the question, what a man who exhibited qualities opposed to his family character should do:

"If my father is a trader and I exhibit the qualities of a soldier, I may without reward serve my country as a soldier, but must be content to earn my bread by trading."

In another place, to the same questionists, he said:

"...it would be quite right for any brainy carpenter

to become a lawyer for service, not for money." *(Young India,* 24-ll-'27)

One more exception, following from the last two, may also be mentioned. If for the purpose of bringing about a radical and healthy change in the society or in a traditional profession, it is necessary to create workers with a fresh mind and a new outlook, some people from other traditional professions might be recruited for the purpose. This would have to be from a spirit of service and not for money. Thus men belonging to traditionally sedentary, intellectual, or so-called 'clean' professions might be encouraged to take to agriculture, cattle-keeping and the like, which involve physical labour, soiling of the body, working in the sun and rain etc.

But such people are exceptions even to this day, though it must be admitted that they have become more frequent now than ever before and have already created a problem.

The causes of this are hierarchical gradations assigned to callings, and taking to one's profession not as a duty, but as an instrument for amassing wealth in a society based on competition and the institution of private property.

Gandhiji's position about the former is cleared by his definition of *varna dharma*:

"In this connection of *varna,* there is absolutely no idea of superiority and inferiority." (Young *India,* 20-10-'27).

Again,

"In my opinion there is no such thing as inherited or acquired superiority.... I believe implicitly that all men are born equal. All—whether born in India or in England or America or in any circumstances whatsoever—have the same soul as any other. And it is because I believe

in this inherent equality of all men that I fight the doctrine of superiority which many of our rulers arrogate to themselves. I have fought this doctrine of superiority in South Africa inch by inch, and it is because of that inherent belief, that I delight in calling myself a scavenger, a spinner, a weaver, a farmer and a labourer. And I have fought against the *Brahmanas* themselves wherever they have claimed any superiority for themselves either by reason of their birth, or by reason of their subsequently acquired knowledge. I consider *that it is unmanly for any person to claim superiority over a fellow-being*.... I am therefore through and through with every non-*Brahmana* when he fights this monster of superiority, whether it is claimed by a *Brahmana* or by anybody else. He who claims superiority at once forfeits his claim to be called a man. This is my opinion." (Young *India,* 29-9-'27).

The other cause of the breakdown of the principle of *varna dharma* is sought to be counteracted by Gandhiji by the principle of trusteeship. This we shall deal with in the next chapter.

Let it be clearly understood, however, that *varna* is not a sectarian or theocratic principle with Gandhiji, but the enunciation of a moral but secular duty of a citizen to himself, his dependents and his society. It is the duty of a citizen to earn his living by practising a profession needed for the wellbeing of society; the profession must be consistent with fundamental ethics; it must be a profession of his forefathers. All notions about superiority and inferiority attached to professions are arbitrary and harmful and must be abolished; so also, restrictions about inter-dining and inter-marriage. Thus all professions are equal in rank.

VIII.
Principle of Trusteeship

What is the principle of Trusteeship? First let us note what it is not, but is erroneously supposed to be.

Some people think that it is just a euphemistic way of justifying one's possession and control of property, power etc., against other claimants whether rival or rightful, on the ground that they could not part with it because none would be able to make a better use of that property or power than they in the interest of the public, who were still not competent enough to manage their own affairs. This was the argument advanced by the British for several years to retain their hold on India. None was better fitted to govern India, they claimed, than they in view of the utter poverty and ignorance of the masses, their internal divisions etc. They said that they held India not in their own interest, but as trustees for the people. But as they did not govern India gratis, or, in the opinion of the then Indian politicians, on reasonable remuneration for the services they rendered, or even honestly, so their plea of trusteeship was regarded by the people as nothing but a pretence for not withdrawing from India.

Even legally appointed trustees, such as a guardian over a minor's property, often evade handing over charge to the minor after he has attained majority on the ground that he has not the adequate capacity to manage it. Such trustees are looked upon as hypocrites and they lose the confidence of the beneficiaries. Owing to this past experience the

very word *trustee* and the theory of trusteeship fell into disrepute and 'progressive' politicians suspected that Gandhiji had obliged the princes, the Zamindars, the capitalists and holders of power by subtly furnishing them with one more weapon to cling to their respective positions of advantage.

It is also supposed that the best trustee of Gandhiji's conception was no more than a man with some philanthropic urges. For instance, if there was a Raja or a millionaire who lived a simple personal life, now and then gave handsome donations, founded good charitable institutions, or made a charitable trust of a part of his property, and if in addition to this, he was also kind to his servants, civil in his general behaviour towards the poor, a hospitable host, obliging to friends, free from gross vices and a 'church-going man' (as he would be called in England), nothing more was to be expected of him to fulfil the obligations of a trustee. His personal household budget, or the manner in which he acquired his wealth was not to be inquired into.

But none of these suppositions are warrantable. The word *trustee* is a legal term, and all the rights and duties that law chooses to assign to that term from time to time will apply to the trustee of Gandhiji's theory, plus a good deal more on moral grounds not covered by law. In 1936 I contributed a series of articles under the caption "Gandhism to Socialism", which were edited and corrected by Gandhiji himself. Therein I explained the theory of trusteeship as follows:

"The problem of stopping exploitation is related to, and is often held to be identical with the institution of private

property, and in Gandhism-Socialism controversies this question is perhaps discussed with greater warmth than any other. On this matter Gandhiji has perhaps more radical views than the most extreme Communist. He would like to dispossess every person of all kinds of belongings. If he tolerates the institution of private property, it is not because he loves it, or holds it to be necessary for the progress of humanity, but because he has yet to discover a truthful and non-violent method of abolishing that institution. I think that all Socialists believe that possessions are absolutely essential to make mankind happy. Gandhiji does not accept that position in theory. But as a practical proposition, he feels, that mankind is not going to give up possessions, within a time which can be estimated. The only thing, therefore, to be considered is in what capacity persons having actual control over and possession of property should be deemed to have it or in what spirit they should be suffered to possess it. Gandhiji says that... where persons possess property, whether that possession is vested in them in a manner deemed legal at the time or otherwise, they must be deemed to hold it in trust for society and not for themselves. Much confusion arises from the fact that people do not take his statements as seriously as they should do. We have often heard British politicians declare that the British Government is a trustee for the welfare of the people of India, without in the least meaning it. We are now accustomed to regard such statements as pretentious platitudes, if not indeed cant... In the same way, he is not taken seriously when he says that all possessors of property are, according

to him, trustees for society. It seems that his critics on this point vaguely think that there is a difference between statutory trustees and constructive trustees in regard to the due fulfilment of their respective trusts. With Gandhiji there is none. He never propounds any theory without providing means for giving practical effect to it. He holds that every possession apart from that required for comfortable sustenance is possible only so long as the others permit it whether helplessly or through ignorance. When helplessness gives way to conscious strength and ignorance to wisdom, over-possession is possible only to the trustee. He says that the strength to be given to the people has to be non-violent if the dispossessed are in their turn not to become as bad as the present possessors."

On one point I was not quite explicit then, as it was not clear to myself. It was this:

Who was the rightful owner and who were the beneficiaries of the property purported to be held in trust? What was the nature of property which fell under this category? And what was the nature and extent of property, which would be allowed by Gandhiji to be treated as private.

I shall try to explain this here. The theory of trusteeship makes no distinction between private and non-private property. All property is held in trust, no matter who possesses it, and what its nature or quantity is. Indeed, the theory of trusteeship applies not only to tangible and transferable property, but also to places of power and position and to intangible and non-transferable property such as the muscular energy of a labourer and the talents

of a Helen Keller. Even a cripple in an asylum for invalids is a trustee to the extent he is able to exercise his will. Every human being not mentally deranged is only a trustee of all that is within his control.

Who is then the owner? Gandhiji would say, God. To God alone belongs the universe and all that is in it, animate or inanimate, tangible or intangible. To take an instance, neither the shareholders, directors, managing agents, technicians, and the labourers jointly or severally, nor even the State is the absolute owner of an industry. They are all contributors to the working of the industry; and the different kinds of contributors are invested with different functions for the efficient working of the industry. Every one of them must use those powers honestly and diligently and take no more from it for personal consumption than what is just and proper under the conditions in which humanity round about him lives.

The idea of God's ownership or of absence of ownership of any human being, or even of the whole of humanity, in anything whatever rejects all claims, either by shareholders, managers, experts or workers to dividends, commissions, bonus etc., *in proportion to profits.* The claim that God created everything in the world for man is not acceptable. He must use everything sparingly for himself and regard himself as accountable for all his acts. Everyone who has contributed to the success of the industries to the best of his capacity may take a wage (if he needs), but the wage should be in accordance with his needs and not in accordance with the value of his contribution. If the capacity of a crippled worker is no more than to sit on a stool and check the articles that leave or enter the factory,

and if he performs that duty honestly, he is entitled to the full ordinary wage *plus* what he needs more on account of his physically helpless condition. As against him the wage of the engineer or an able-bodied worker may be just full ordinary. The managing agent, if he is also getting a wage in another capacity or elsewhere, may not take any wage at all. The monetary wage would be no guide for evaluating a man's capacity or worth.

The idea also rejects the right of the State or directors or workers to destroy that property wantonly, on the ground that they may do anything with what belongs to them.

The idea of ownership being thus disposed of, the next question is who are beneficiaries of a property ? The answer is, the entire creation is the beneficiary. For instance, it is not only those actually engaged in working an industry that are entitled to its fruits; but everything is to be shared with every one else, not forgetting even non-human life.

No doubt, man's limitations of vision will limit the application of the principle of co-sharing proportionately. It will be applied to the local region first; there, too, man will be served in priority to other life. But as the vision expands and resources allow, the duty is to expand the field of service progressively to as great an extent as possible. Not even a self-sufficient village has an exclusive right to all its production, if it is wanted for life in distress in another part of the world. And if it does not need anything which the other can spare, or if the latter is too poor to give anything in exchange, it cannot demand any price for it.

The question as to the nature and extent of property Gandhiji would allow to be used as private is now easily

answered. That which is due to a worker and needed by him, he may use in a discreet manner for proper purposes. If, however, for any reason, he does not need it, and may not require it in the near future, he should give it over to one who needs it or return to the common fund of his unit.

It is also not difficult to understand after the foregoing why Gandhiji was opposed both to expropriation on the one hand and to the payment of compensation on the other. Expropriation is unnecessary and unjust if the present holders consent to fulfil the obligations of trustees. An attempt should be made first to convert them to that position. Compensation is unnecessary because no trustee is ever compensated on removal. If he is unwilling to fulfil the obligations of a trustee, claiming the property as his own, he takes up a position which cannot be accepted. He has therefore to be removed and a new arrangement has to be made. So, there is no case for compensation.

IX.
Simple Life and Decentralization

Gandhiji's emphasis on manual productive labour, small self-sufficient units, decentralized political and economic order and a simple way of life follows from the principles hitherto discussed.

Modern life has become so complicated and interwoven, that with all one's love and respect for life, and desire for peace, non-violence and amity, it has become almost impossible to avoid destruction and exploitation of life,

enormous waste of nature's materials and human labour, and ever-preparedness for war, with all its technical, scientific and political implications. Besides, one does not even know how and where the things one consumes are produced, how they are transported and distributed, and how they affect world economy. Much of this waste could be easily avoided if life were arranged on a simpler pattern. Even some of the modernized wants of life like, say, dental powder, are such as could be easily produced in every village; others like, say, writing paper or ordinary ink, in a *taluka* town; still others like, say, standardized parts of *charkhas,* looms, household furniture, fixtures etc., a district can produce for its own area. No village need ordinarily depend upon others for food, clothing and simple house-building materials. In decentralized production the producers and the consumers know one another and their living and working conditions. With a decentralized government, which is fully representative and enjoys as much autonomy as possible, an awakened democracy would have greater opportunities for drawing plans and programmes which they could be sure of implementing. They would also be able to remove the drawbacks and evils as soon as they appear. If violence is unavoidable in a particular occupation, say, in the preparation of soft-leather slippers, or of a medicine like liver extract, the people would know that it would have to be done and so could decide whether they should do it or go without it. In centralized industries, very few consumers know how things are done. A votary of non-violence thinks that digitalis is a herbal drug and may be taken without the infringement of his principles,

little suspecting that before the stock from which his small phial of tablets was packed, was put on the market, it had been tested upon dozens of guinea-pigs or other creatures to determine its fatal and safe doses for human life. He is innocent about it, because he has never seen the herb itself or the factory in which it is converted into various medicinal forms. Similarly, in the centralized scheme monkeys are exported to America by people who will not shoot them even though they destroy all their crops. They never stop to think that the creatures are purchased for subjecting them to vivisectional tortures. If the people saw these experiments with their own eyes, they would know that if monkeys were a nuisance, there was less violence in killing them straightway than in exporting them alive to a foreign country. Similarly, wanton and heartless violence upon milch cattle and also misplanning on a gigantic scale are perpetrated for the supply of milk to cities.

Thus, simplicity of life and of economic and political order provides a more suitable environment for the establishment of a non-violent society than an order based on excessive centralization, mechanization and production on gigantic scales. The latter renders indispensable expensive political and administrative machinery, such heavy militarization as would exhaust the greater part of the national revenue and such inextricably complicated financial entanglements as would make even the best of experts mere gropers in the dark. Besides, it is not only steam, gas and electricity that are harnessed, and wheels and levers regimented to ensure definite movements, but man himself is mechanized and regimented, and every

catastrophe becomes a reason for further depriving him of his freedom of action and choice of occupation, food, clothes, house etc. He has to accept what the powers that be determine for him.

Not that a simpler civilization could guarantee total absence of violence, injustice and hardship, and ensure perfect freedom, goodwill and peace. After all, violence and non-violence are results of culture and spiritual and moral growth and not of an external mode of life as such. Non-violence cannot develop without the simultaneous development of other spiritual and moral qualities and by simply observing certain external rules of life and conduct and maintaining one's comforts and wants within particular limits. The violence of a village headman or a trader might qualitatively be as intense and high as that of a gas-chamber executioner, or of modern business syndicates, adulterators and black-marketeers. But the extent and quantity of violence will always be less and easier to spot and control in the simple way of life than in the complicated one.

An equal standard of life for all may be the best ideal, but, it will be contended, it is impossible ever to see it put into practice. Even in a village, there are bound to be people with varying standards of life. It will be particularly so when one lays stress upon greater individual freedom and minimum regimentation and State control.

There is some truth in this. But here too the degree of difference between the highest and the lowest will be far smaller than what prevails at present. Even if capitalism prevails in practice, a village millionaire's mansion cannot be of the same dimensions and furnished with the same

comforts as that of his cousin in Bombay, and he and the members of his family would not be quite ignorant of or unknown to the people of the village. In Bombay even neighbours never know or care to know one another. The village millionaire might use brass utensils while the ordinary peasant has only earthen ones. But the difference is much smaller than that between the city millionaire's dining-hall furnished with glass-top tables, expensive crockery, silver spoons and forks, and beautiful pictures, flowers, scents, and other adornments, and his servants' low-roofed one or two-room tenements in another part of the same compound. And the difference, again between the latter and the living conditions of a city hawker, not to speak of the *bhangi,* is also much greater than that in a simpler way of life.

The difference between the daily life of the village millionaire's family and that of his village people will also be both qualitatively and quantitatively much less than that between the city millionaire's and his poor neighbours'. The village millionaire's wife and children might have polished *charkhas* and cleaner clothes, also more ornaments and better dress for use on an occasion of festivity than his neighbours. But still the wife would spin and take part in domestic duties and be familiar with domestic economy and problems in the same way as the poor of the village. They would have their songs and sports with the ordinary people, and when people mix for sports and songs, consciousness of a difference in the status diminishes. In cities, the millionaires form a caste of their own and the middle classes and the ordinary folk have also their own several social groups. They never

know and understand the problems of the people living in strata below their own.

When people in various stations of life and engaged in various occupations come into constant contact with one another, and their life is under the daily observation of their neighbours, a sense of self-restraint is unconsciously generated. In a small community one cannot be too lavish, selfish and regardless of the comforts and lives of others. This itself is helpful for the development of the idea of trusteeship.

Thus, even if the principle of trusteeship remains only a counsel of perfection and the institution of private property continues to exist, a simple life and a decentralized order are by themselves a more favourable condition for the reduction of violence, inequalities and economic conflicts.

X.
Conclusion

I believe I have dealt with most of the important aspects of both the Gandhian and the Marxian doctrines. I have tried to show that the Gandhian way of looking at life and life's problems is basically different from the Marxian one, and the difference cannot be stated by such simple equations as "Gandhism is Communism *minus* violence", or "Gandhism is Communism *plus* God". It is also not correct to equate the aim of "establishing a classless socialist State" with Gandhism. Even to say that Gandhism stands for "philosophical anarchy", i.e. absence of a regular government without the disorder created by

its absence or "dissolution of large-scale political, social, industrial and cultural institutions" appears to me hardly apposite.

In positive terms, I would say that Gandhism is the method of progressing towards an ideal. The ideal itself, to give Gandhiji's favourite simile, is like Euclid's point, capable of being conceived by the mind, but incapable of being perfectly drawn even with the finest point of a needle. It is also like a high peak of the Himalayas. When we perceive it from a distance, we do not realize that it might be too difficult to reach. But as we begin to climb, we find that what we thought to be the final goal is but a stage in the way, and a new far away mount appears before the vision as the final one; and this process might take place endlessly. It is a long-range everlasting programme, and yet usefully implementable by even single individuals. Truthfulness, non-violence, equality of status, of opportunities, of distribution of wealth and of necessaries and comforts of life; absence of State control, decentralization, non-mechanization, peace, amity, harmony, freedom from war, regimentation and competition, and the largest measure of freedom consistent with orderly society are its several desiderata. None of them can be realized absolutely and singly, and an attempt to select one or two of them for being fully put into practice, apart from others, may lead even to absurdities and monstrous developments. They are not matters of mere mechanical application and enforcement by law. Gandhiji once said in praise of a worker, who, to his knowledge, had always lived a middle-class city life, that "he had caught rural-mindedness". By this he

meant that the worker's mind sought to devise simple and rural ways and means of manipulating things, so that one may create in a village the essential comforts of life with self-help, local materials and simple tools. Rabindranath Tagore had also a mission and a message for rural India. But the Poet's emphasis lay more on the revival of beauty, art and joy in rural life; that of Gandhiji on that of industry, cleanliness, health and morals thereof. He had, however, the greatest regard for and full appreciation of the Poet's mission, because his rural-mindedness did not consist in shabbiness, crudeness, irregular and dirty habits, the habit of being satisfied with hard, not to say sub-human, conditions of life, tolerance of injustice and evil, putting up with insults, humiliations or injury to self-respect, and absence of beauty, art, fancy, or joy of life, expressed through its prayers, songs, dances, *kathas,* pictures, cottages, household and occupational furniture and other details of life.

Gandhiji's way of life has, on the one hand, been mistaken for the *traditional* Hindu way of *vairagya* and *sadhu* life; his non-violence for the *traditional* Jaina and Vaishnava practices of maintenance and preservation of animal and insect life, even if in a most abject condition and in a way detrimental to the security of the lives of others; his humility, for putting up with insults; and his self-immolation, for non-resistance and submission to evil. On the other hand, his doctrine of active non-violence and the dictum that' violence is better than cowardice' have been frequently referred to so as to almost give a sanction to war and violent retaliation.

In my humble opinion, these are travesties perhaps

unconscious, of Gandhiji's view of life.

Life, expressed whether in individual or collective form, and whether consistently and harmoniously or otherwise, is an eternal struggle for finding an ideal condition of existence. None knows what that ideal condition, if it is ever realized, will look like in the physical universe; how exactly it can be attained, what unavoidable intervening stages it must pass through to reach it; what exactly should be done to rectify the breaches, wrongs and mistakes committed from time to time; to what extent and in what manner the consequences of unjust deeds, which have been perpetrated, can be nullified. None can make exact predictions about the future course of individual or social evolution. So none may swear or say of a social order that it alone is in accordance with Truth and every other order of life is false. The limitation of man's talents has to be confessed. The wisest man is just a seeker and much of his seeking is in the midst of a thick and trackless forest on a dark and cloudy night. A flash of lightning, now and then, might show him a step and vanish. The most earnest seeker has to rely only on that momentary flash to take the next step. Gandhiji humbly realized this limitation and was never tired of repeating Cardinal Newman's line, "one step enough for me." The new and clear lead which he gave, consisted in this : Howsoever certain a person might feel about the truth of his words, actions and ideas, he must have the humility to recognize that he might be in error somewhere. The fact that he does not perceive any such error, justifies him, nay, as a seeker and votary of Truth, lays an obligation upon him, to pursue it actively and relentlessly, so far as he is personally concerned, and to preach it also to others. But

the possibility of an error lays upon him also the further obligation to see that his pursuit does not inflict harm on others, or compel one, who does not agree with him to submit to it through fear. The existence of opposite views is bound to create a situation of conflict. The only safeguard against this is the insistence on the adoption of truthful and non-violent means. The principle of 'pure means for pure ends' ensures equal rights and safeguards to everyone, and makes true democracy possible. He may neither use deceitful and violent methods to bring about an adoption of his view of life; nor, since he is convinced of its correctness, abandon his duty to practise and preach his own path. This will expose him to the danger of being deceived and violently dealt with by others, who do not accept the rule of purity of means. The risk has to be faced. If the other side also accepts the same rules of restraint, it would always be possible to find a *via media* for an amicable solution of the conflict. If it does not accept them, a *Satyagraha* conflict would arise. The conflict might result, after it has progressed for a while, in bringing about in the other side a change — if not positively of the heart — at least of attitude. This will also open an explorable way to peace. It would be a stage in the process of the change of heart by total conversion. But the conflict might also result in the self-immolation and the martyrdom of the *satyagrahi,* when the forces opposed to him are too stubborn. He might also have to suffer, if he was, in the opinion of his opponent, so hopelessly wrong in his perception of Truth, that to relent would be regarded by the opponent as a surrender to untruth on his part. The last would be a case of one *satyagrahi* pitted against another. Though a tragic end is not very likely in such cases, it may

be conceived as a possibility in an extreme case.

A violent revolution gives an appearance of radical changes, rapidly brought about in society. But ultimately society returns to the level of the order, which it is fitted for in the process of its evolution. Permanent changes can be brought about only by non-violence. They may involve intermediate stages and steps, and appear as a compromise of principles. But there is a difference between the two. It is a compromise of principles when the *satyagrahi* accepts the truth of principles, on which the opponent rests his claim. It is an intermediate stage when, in order to avoid the hardships that might accrue to the opponent by a sudden change in the course of his life, a ladder is built up for a graded progress.

Before concluding, let me say a word by way of warning. The kind of propaganda, which is carried on at present against Communism, reminds one of the hue and cry which watchful villagers raise at midnight, when they perceive a pack of wolves approaching towards their village. On hearing the cry, women and children hurriedly shut themselves up in a room, cattle are hid, a few youths run out with their hatchets, sticks, etc., and the elderly men light fire all around. The purpose of the first hue and cry is to create a scare in the sleeping population; that of the second one to scare away and beat off the wolves. The way, in which Communism is sought to be fought by Fascist and so-called democratic countries and their propagandists, is similar to this.

The United States of America and other countries of the West hope to defeat Communism with their destructive armaments and political and economic manoeuvres.

In India, we advocate the "Gandhian Way" more for exploiting the public sentiments than for implementing it in our life. We also try to attract the people towards us by interpreting Gandhiji in terms of Marxism. Along with this, the State machinery works energetically to suppress the Communist activities.

But I doubt the efficacy of all these methods. I am afraid, it makes the opponents of Communism look ridiculous, and in accordance with the general experience of life, the very attempt to suppress it makes it grow strong. You cannot suppress Communism whether by atom and hydrogen bombs, by monetary aids provided with a motive, by appealing to Gandhian slogans, or by imprisonments or shootings. The last may be inevitable as an immediate step against actual lawlessness, in a world where all political parties are agreed that force is the ultimate sanction of Government; but it will not help a Government long, even if it is totally Fascist. Communism is bound to come, unless the Gandhian way of life is actually and actively adopted. It is bound to come, because it is the only way left for the leader-forsaken, half-awakened, desperate masses to protest against the chaos and anarchy ruling in the name of democracy and orderly progress.

The difference between Gandhism and Marxism is great, but greater still is the difference between Gandhism and unbridled capitalistic, feudal and caste orders. Unless those who enjoy privileged positions in the present system of life in the shape of abundant wealth and superior caste relinquish them and constitute themselves true trustees of the wealth in their possession and make themselves equal in rank with the masses, reduce their standard of

life in conformity with the poverty of the country, and pledge themselves to work for the wellbeing of every one, in the absence of a non-violent leader as great as Gandhiji himself, Communism with all its violent force is inevitable. And in that case those, who say that Communism is a stage preceding to Gandhism, i.e. a non-violent order, will be regarded as nearer to truth. The way to avoid this violent struggle is to voluntarily make a series of successive graded changes in the current way of life. Rank, caste, untouchability, etc. must go; unemployment and hunger must be abolished; provincialism and communalism must abate; nationalism must shed its selfishness, aggressiveness and imperialistic propensities; the difference between the highest and the lowest standards of life must diminish to an enormous extent; judicial and executive administration must show immediate and easily noticeable moral improvement; the semblance of democracy must give way to real democracy and sense of responsibility. Even all these changes will not lead to Gandhism as such; but they will be appreciated by the masses as progress towards it. If we are not earnest about these steps, the tide of Communism cannot be stemmed; and as the present state of affairs is not one, for the continuance of which a devotee might offer prayers to God, the tide would come with all its force to wash away all that stands in the way.

There is still time for the custodians of capital and holders of social rank to bring about graded changes in their lives. May it please God to grant that wisdom to every one of us.

Appendices

Appendix I
'Gandhism' To Socialism
I

Several friends have repeatedly asked me to discuss at length 'Gandhism' in relation to Socialism. But I have been unwilling to do so and have even discouraged these academical discussions. We are a people whom nothing catches more than academical discussions, so much so that in the excitement of discussions we even lose sight of the practical consequences of carrying on debates, which by their very nature are of an endless type.

To a certain extent, moreover, these discussions are often held on the assumption of premises which are not certain. For instance, in the present case, we do not know what are the exact dogmas of either Gandhism or Socialism. As to the former, Gandhiji himself told the members of the Gandhi Seva Sangh at Savli in March last as follows:

> "There is no such thing as 'Gandhism', and I do not want to leave any sect after me. I do not claim to have originated any new principle or doctrine. I have simply tried in my own way to apply the eternal truths to our daily life and problems... The opinions I have formed and the conclusions I have arrived at are not final. I may change them tomorrow. I have nothing new to

teach the world. Truth and non-violence are as old as the hills. All I have done is to try experiments in both on as vast a scale as I could do. In doing so I have sometimes erred and learnt by my errors. Life and its problems have thus become to me so many experiments in the practice of truth and non-violence. By instinct I have been truthful, but not non-violent...In fact it was in the course of my pursuit of truth that I discovered non-violence...

"Well all my philosophy, if it may be called by that pretentious name, is contained in what I have said. You will not call it 'Gandhism'; there is no ism about it "*(Harijan,* 28th March, 1936, p. 49)

When this is the position taken up by the leader himself, how inappropriate it would be for those seeking to serve under him to engage themselves in a controversy with the propagandists of another doctrine!

Then in regard to Socialism also, there is no exactly defined set of dogmas. Those who attack or uphold it often do so aimlessly and vaguely. It is a philosophy, or rather the nebula of a philosophy, which, to use the words of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, "involves a certain psychological outlook on life and its problems. It is more than mere logic. So also are the other outlooks based on heredity, upbringing, the unseen influences of the past and our present environments." *(Autobiography,* p. 368). Being so, it is still growing, though attempting necessarily to touch all sides of human activities—religious, moral, political, social, economic, and as must be inevitable with a growing doctrine, on every side there is want of uniformity of opinion. But the result is that one may attack or uphold

a side of Socialism only to find that his opponent does not consider that side to be vital to his doctrines, or of much practical importance, or is not in disagreement with the debater on that matter. For instance, to take no less an exponent than Pandit Jawaharlal himself. In a letter to Shrimati Premabahen Kantak, he is reported to have written as follows:

> "...What have questions relating to marriage and sex to do with volunteering or even with Socialism? In a wide sense of the word Socialism is a philosophy of life and, therefore, it covers and includes all aspects of life. But ordinarily Socialism means a certain economic theory. When I talk of it I mean that economic theory; and all this talk of religion or marriage and morals in connection with it is absurd." (Bombay Chronicle, 7th October 1936)

This may or may not be the attitude of other Socialists, and so such discussions, whether on behalf of or against ill-understood 'Gandhism' or ill-understood Socialism, can hardly contribute to clear thinking. They simply tend to create parties, the members of which have no clear notions, but have only succeeded in developing a like or dislike for a particular word or slogan, and on the strength of that are tempted to create internal strifes in the localities under their influence. Then, in the absence of any exact programme to be immediately put into execution, these debates do not much benefit either the controversialists or the people, but only become a handle for those who are interested in putting down both. They, the opponents of both, instinctively become forewarned and strengthen their own organizations. As they stand for themselves

and not the people, it is easier for them to do so, being few in numbers and having, comparatively speaking, unlimited resources at their command. The power of the State being also behind them, the repression of, first, the one and, then, of the other debating parties necessarily follows. Unwittingly, the academical discussions create estrangement and bad blood between the debaters and, to the great harm of the country, they become, if not active, at least passive tools or indifferent spectators of the repression of the other body.

It is indeed necessary that there should be as much clear thinking as possible on the various problems affecting the country. But of these problems, there are some on which clear thinking is more urgently and imperatively needed than others; and there are some, on which it is not possible for a large number of even fairly intelligent people to be quite clear in their thoughts at this stage—even with hard thinking—because in practical problems certain outside developments have to take place more vividly before a large number of people can be made to think clearly on them. In my opinion, *to* those who have at heart the attainment of the country's freedom, it is imperatively necessary to be quite clear in their minds on the following points, as being more urgent than others:

1. Nothing can and will be achieved unless there is a very large number of young men and women who will ardently and seriously devote themselves to a life of service.
2. Their work will not gain strength or yield fruit unless they are men and women of stern character and purpose.

3. They cannot have sternness of character and purpose for a long period, unless they are far more self-controlled and disciplined and averse to a life of frivolity and pleasure-seeking than the average self-centred youth.
4. It must be realized very clearly that a very much larger number of life-workers than that at present in the field will be needed in the years to come and before Swaraj is attained. A majority of them will have to come from the present middle, and lower middle classes. This will unavoidably necessitate a life of, materially speaking, greatest simplicity, poverty and hardship—not to mention great physical exertion also,—and the country's cause must fail unless the character of the youth among these classes is cast into a mould which will prepare them for such life. Whether or no a simple and hard-worked life is *per se* desirable, it is a condition precedent to Swaraj in India.

I think that these are realities, even though they may seem hard, which must be appreciated and faced bravely both by those who lean towards Gandhian methods or those inclined towards what is conceived of as the Socialist way of thinking. Any attitude towards life, whether urged on a so-called spiritualistic or a so-called materialistic doctrine, which scoffs at a life of self-control, self-discipline or self-imposed simplicity (otherwise called poverty), or rouses in the mind of the growing generation a hunger for a sensuous and pleasure-seeking life, must result in delaying the day of freedom.

Harijan, 28-11-'36

II

Then to those who are intellectually or emotionally attracted towards Gandhiji's teachings I wish to point out the following permanent features of his teachings, or rather methods, which should be put into practice by all those who look to him for light:

Approach all the problems that may confront you through truth, through non-violence and through service.

'Through truth' means that you will be always open-minded and never afraid of retracing from or confessing an error, and will be prepared to risk your all for the cause, which for the time being you clearly conceive to be true.

'Through non-violence' means that you have to fight every kind of evil with what Gandhiji has called soul-force as opposed to brute-force. As has been made clear by him, it is not a negative attitude but a method of direct action. The power of violence has been employed, explored and almost brought to scientific perfection in the world through centuries. A group of people may achieve their material end through violence if their violence is more organized, perfected and resourceful than that of the opponent. Apart from the spiritual attitude towards non-violence, even on practical considerations, it is necessary, that one should not adopt the means in which the opponent is a greater adept than oneself, but one should discover and evolve to perfection an absolutely different kind of means. The power of non-violence or love, or winning through self-suffering rather than punishment, is as ancient as that of violence, but it has not been fully explored and brought to perfection. Gandhiji has not brought a new force into being any more than Newton brought the law

of gravitation into being. Gandhiji's attempt throughout his life has been to explore the potentialities and varieties of the power of non-violence. Just as it has taken ages for violence to come to its present stage of machine-guns, tanks, airplanes, poison-gas and the like, together with spying, bribing, fabricating and other non-truthful means to its assistance, and has received the services of thousands of talented men through all these ages, in the same way non-violence demands devotion of zealous researchers of that force. So, for one who believes in Gandhiji's method, there is a clear mission before him, and that is, of contributing his mite to exploring the potentialities of *ahimsa*, by intelligently devoting himself to its practice in the sphere of his activities. The inventor of arms is expected to have a talent for physical and chemical sciences; the explorer of *ahimsa* needs must have an inexhaustible store of love, active, but free from selfishness or infatuation. Not that he does not need intellectual equipment; but it would be of no service to him in this work, if the store of love is meagre.

The third factor in the Gandhian way of approach to a problem is service; more accurately it is a product of truth and non-violence. This means that it is not through the literary or intellectual discourses on the doctrines of truth, non-violence, non-possession, etc. that Gandhiji's mission can be executed, unless these activities are accompanied by active, direct and personal service of the people. Press and other propaganda are means which, like machinery, are innocent in themselves but inevitably under the present conditions it is the opponent (the wielder of violence) who has greater control and service of those means, and can

employ them for his benefit with greater ease than the masses or their advocates can do. We must have means which are rather unique. These are actual services, even studiously silent and unadvertized.

Subject to the above method of approach to a problem, another permanent feature of Gandhiji's life is that he is as staunch a resister of the exploitation of the downtrodden as any Socialist. He would stop not only the exploitation of the masses by the possessors of wealth and power, but also by the possessors of intellect. So that provided a truthful and non-violent method of immediately grappling with the problem is discovered, Gandhiji's teachings would not allow exploitation of any kind to be tolerated for a day.

The problem of stopping exploitation is related to, and is often held to be identical with, the institution of private property, and in Gandhism-Socialism controversies this question is perhaps discussed with greater warmth than any other. On this matter Gandhiji has perhaps more radical views than the most extreme Communist. He would like to dispossess every person of all kinds of belongings. If he tolerates the institution of private property, it is not because he loves it, or holds it to be necessary for the progress of humanity, but because he has yet to discover a truthful and non-violent method of abolishing that institution. I think that all Socialists believe that possessions are absolutely essential to make mankind happy. Gandhiji does not accept that position in theory. But as a practical proposition, he feels that mankind is not going to give up possessions, within a time which can be estimated. The only thing, therefore, to be considered is in what capacity persons having actual

control over and possession of property should be deemed to have it or in what spirit they should be suffered to possess it. Gandhiji says that whether a person or group of persons possess property, whether that possession is vested in them in a manner deemed legal at the time or otherwise, they must be deemed to hold it in trust for the society and not for themselves. Much confusion arises from the fact that people do not take his statements as seriously as they should do. We have often heard the British politicians declare that the British Government is a trustee for the welfare of the people of India, without in the least meaning it. We are now accustomed to regard such statements as pretentious platitudes, if not indeed cant. A charge is being urged that Gandhiji subscribes to a similar platitude. When Gandhiji declared at the Round Table Conference that he would oppose the separation of the Harijans from the rest of the Hindus with his life, he was not taken seriously. It was considered to be a piece of rhetoric, with the result that he was compelled to prove that he seriously meant what he said. In the same way, he is not taken seriously when he says that all possessors of property are, according to him, trustees for the society. It seems that his critics on this point vaguely think that there is a difference between statutory trustees and constructive trustees in regard to the due fulfilment of their respective trusts. With Gandhiji there is none. He never propounds any theory without providing means for giving practical effect to it. He holds that every possession apart from that required for comfortable sustenance is possible only so long as the others permit it whether helplessly or through ignorance. When helplessness gives

way to conscious strength and ignorance to wisdom, over-possession is possible only to the trustee. He says that the strength to be given to the people has to be non-violent if the dispossessed are in their turn not to become as bad as the present possessors. He also contends that this strength can be more easily evolved than that of violence. We cannot carry this point any further as he and those who believe in his method are engaged in actually working out the proposition.

Harijan, 5-12-'36

III

At this stage perhaps it would be well to examine Gandhiji's present activities in the light of what I have said before. He is not satisfied with a passive withdrawal from the Congress or active politics. He is not satisfied with guiding the village programme from Maganwadi. He must bury himself in an out-of-the-way village called Segaon, without railway, without postal and telegraphic facilities—a swamp in the rainy season. This is his non-violent approach to the present problems that vex the Congress, the Press and the Government. Nothing could be conceived as more out of the tune with them than Gandhiji's apparent withdrawal from them. And yet nothing is more natural for him even for the solution of these great problems. He hopes to discover a non-violent solution by being in living contact with the villagers, and among them those who are considered the lowest on the social ladder. He has surrounded himself with Harijans of the place. If he teaches the people to turn waste into wealth, to provide themselves with good milk, good *gur,*

to make their village free of insanitation and diseases due to the former, to become literate and well-informed on current events, who will deny that the people of Segaon may acquire a consciousness of the power inherent in every man? It is not altogether impossible that such villagers will compel the attention of all India not excluding the Government. Let me not overdraw the picture. Gandhiji knows the difficulties of the task. He says it may be impossible for man, nothing is impossible for God. And he has an immovable faith in the God of Truth and *Ahimsa* i.e. Love.

One more feature of Gandhiji's methods, and I have done. It is not that Gandhiji is absolutely innocent of agitations and demonstrations. Indeed, when he has organized agitations or demonstrations, he has drawn the attention of the whole world towards him. But there is a peculiarity about his agitations and demonstrations, which must never be forgotten, if one wants to have an intelligent understanding of his attitude towards various problems. It is this: He never arouses public feeling against a wrong, howsoever keen his own feelings about it might be, unless he feels himself to be in a position to lead the people along a definite way for removing that evil. He does not believe in sound-box agitations or soap-bubble demonstrations made more for the sake of newspaper reports than for coming to grips with the problem in hand. When Gandhiji takes up a question and tries to agitate the public over it and organizes some demonstration about it, one might be sure that he means to follow it up with some effective and, if necessary, direct action. Until he has thought out some such programme, he is satisfied

with maintaining and advising others to maintain silence about the wrongs, even at the risk of being misunderstood.

This is, I think, sufficient material for Gandhiji's follower with which to carry on his work with faith. Far-reaching, grave, international and complicated problems do and will certainly arise. They have to be studied with great care at the right time. A few people, more learned and intelligent than others, will study them first-hand. Others, unavoidably, will base their opinions on second-hand material. Even the opinions of several scholars renowned as experts, are to a great extent formed on second-hand material. Then none of the world experts today are intelligent enough to give absolutely correct explanations, solutions or predictions on several of these complicated problems. The opinions confidently given today often become untenable in less than six months. Too much academic discussion on these questions becomes an idle, unnecessary, futile, and even perplexing pursuit to people, who can have only second-hand and generally incomplete information on these matters. It is far safer for them to say and feel with Gandhiji, 'One step is enough for me.' Indeed, it seems to me that when a person becomes too strongly opinionated on all kinds of problems his mind ceases to be progressive. It is better to suspend judgment on problems which we are not in a position to tackle at once.

There is a large number of the reading public to whom Gandhiji's methods and 'constructive' programmes do not appeal. They are not attractive or exciting enough. It cannot be helped. It is not worth while either to carry on endless arguments with them or to find fault with

them. They must be allowed to live and act according to their notions and tastes without ill-feeling. Even if they think that they cannot help condemning Gandhiji's teachings and methods, they must be free without incurring resentment to do so. They can be won only by giving a visible demonstration of the fruits of truthful and non-violent action.

Lastly, if in spite of Gandhiji the word *Gandhism* does come to stay, let it, at least, be understood that it connotes rather a method than a dogmatic theory of a person.

K. G. Mashruwala

Harijan, 12-12-'36

Appendix II

Gandhiji's Communism

Gandhiji has often claimed in the course of his discussions with Communist and Socialist friends that he is a better Communist or a Socialist than they. Their goal is identical. The difference in regard to the means and the technique employed is however fundamental. Changing the structure of society through violence and untruth has no attraction for him because he knows that it will not benefit the dumb millions of India. During the period of his detention in the Aga Khan Palace he studied Communist literature. He has a scientific mind and the knowledge of Communism and Socialism picked up from his talks with friends and casual reading did not satisfy him. He read *Das Capital* and went through some of the other writings of Marx as also of Engels, Lenin and Stalin. He read some books about the Reds in China too and at the end of it was convinced more than ever that Communism of his conception was the only thing that could bring relief to the suffering humanity. In his Ashram and the institutions that are being run under his guidance and inspiration, the ruling principle is: "To each according to his need, from each according to his capacity." His Ashrams are thus themselves experiments in Communism based on non-violence and Indian village conditions. In Sevagram Ashram the dictum is followed that the inmates are there only on the sufferance of the village people. A cantankerous fellow felled some Ashram trees for his use as fuel though he had no title to them.

Another encroached upon the right of way through his field although he had accepted compensation for it. No legal redress was applied for. An announcement was made that the Ashram people were there only for the service of the village folk and that they would go away elsewhere if the latter did not want them. Ultimately the trouble-makers were persuaded by their fellow villagers to behave reasonably. In Sabarmati Ashram the women inmates not only merged their domestic kitchens into the communal kitchen and continued to run it but were even persuaded not only to take children other than their own into their families and to look after them like their own but also to let their children be looked after by others. Here was an experiment of pulling down of the walls and emancipation of women without the disintegration of family life—a veritable revolution less the anarchy. But as a friend humorously remarked after dining in the common kitchen of the Talimi Sangh, which feeds more than a hundred individuals, "Gandhiji calls it a *rasoda* (kitchen) and it sounds commonplace; the Communists would call it a 'Commune' and everybody would be impressed by it." Did not the good old knight of Addison wonder how a certain play could be a tragedy since there was not a line in it but he could understand?

Meaning of Economic Equality

"What exactly do you mean by economic equality," Gandhiji was asked at the Constructive Workers' Conference during his recent tour of Madras "and what is statutory trusteeship as conceived by you?"

Gandhiji's reply was that economic equality of his

conception did not mean that every one would literally have the same amount. It simply meant that everybody should have enough for his or her needs. For instance, he required two *shawls* in winter whereas his grandnephew Kanu Gandhi who stayed with him and was like his own son did not require any warm clothing whatsoever. Gandhiji required goat's milk, oranges and other fruit. Kanu could do with ordinary food. He envied Kanu but there was no point in it. Kanu was a young man whereas he was an old man of 76. The monthly expense of his food was far more than that of Kanu but that did not mean that there was economic inequality between them. The elephant needs a thousand times more food than the ant, but that is not an indication of inequality. So the real meaning of economic equality was: "To each according to his need." That was the definition of Marx. If a single man demanded as much as a man with wife and four children that would be a violation of economic equality.

"Let no one try to justify the glaring difference between the classes and the masses, the prince and the pauper, by saying that the former need more. That will be idle sophistry and a travesty of my argument," he continued. "The contrast between the rich and the poor today is a painful sight. The poor villagers are exploited by the foreign government and also by their own countrymen, the city-dwellers. They produce the food and go hungry. They produce milk and their children have to go without it. It is disgraceful. Every one must have a balanced diet, a decent house to live in, facilities for the education of his children and adequate medical relief." That constituted his picture of economic equality. He did not want to

taboo everything above and beyond the bare necessaries but they must come after the essential needs of the poor are satisfied. First things must come first.

Statutory Trusteeship

As for the present owners of wealth they would have to make their choice between class war and voluntary converting themselves into trustees of their wealth. They would be allowed to retain the stewardship of their possessions and to use their talent to increase the wealth, not for their own sakes, but for the sake of the nation and therefore without exploitation. The State would regulate the rate of commission which they would get commensurate with the service rendered and its value to society. Their children would inherit the stewardship only if they proved their fitness for it.

"Supposing India becomes a free country tomorrow," he concluded, "all the capitalists will have an opportunity of becoming statutory trustees." But such a statute will not be imposed from above. It will have to come from below. When the people understand the implications of trusteeship and the atmosphere is ripe for it, the people themselves, beginning with *gram Panchayats,* will begin to introduce such statutes. Such a thing coming from below is easy to swallow. Coming from above, it is liable to prove a dead weight.

His Quarrel with the Socialists

Q.: "What is the difference between your technique and that of the Communists or Socialists for realizing the goal of economic equality?"

A.: "The Socialists and the Communists say they can do nothing to bring about economic equality today. They will just carry on propaganda in its favour and to that end they believe in generating and accentuating hatred. They say, when they get control over the State they will enforce equality. Under my plan the State will be there to carry out the will of the people, not to dictate to them or force them to do its will. I shall bring about economic equality through non-violence, by converting the people to my point of view by harnessing the forces of love as against hatred. I will not wait till I have converted the whole society to my view but will straightway make a beginning with myself. It goes without saying that I cannot hope to bring about economic equality of my conception if I am the owner of fifty motor cars or even of ten *bighas* of land. For that I have to reduce myself to the level of the poorest of the poor. That is what I have been trying to do for the last fifty years or more, and so I claim to be a foremost Communist although I make use of cars and other facilities offered to me by the rich. They have no hold on me and I can shed them at a moment's notice, if the interests of the masses demand it."

The Non-violent Sanction

Q.: "What is the place of Satyagraha in making the rich realize their duty towards the poor?"

A.: "The same as against the foreign power. Satyagraha is a law of universal application. Beginning with the family its use can be extended to every other circle. Supposing a landowner exploits his tenants and mulcts them of the fruit of their toil by appropriating it to his own use. When

they expostulate with him he does not listen and raises objections that he requires so much for his wife, so much for his children and so on. The tenants or those who have espoused their cause and have influence will make an appeal to his wife to expostulate with her husband. She would probably say that for herself she does not need his exploited money. The children will say likewise that they would earn for themselves what they need.

"Supposing further that he listens to nobody or that his wife and children combine against the tenants, they will not submit. They will quit if asked to do so but they will make it clear that the land belongs to him who tills it. The owner cannot till all the land himself and he will have to give in to their just demands. It may, however, be that the tenants are replaced by others. Agitation short of violence will then continue till the replacing tenants see their error and make common cause with the evicted tenants. Thus Satyagraha is a process of educating public opinion, such that it covers all the elements of society and in the end makes itself irresistible. Violence interrupts the process and prolongs the real revolution of the• whole social structure."

The conditions necessary for the success of Satyagraha are: (1) The Satyagrahi should not have any hatred in his heart against the opponent. (2) The issue must be true and substantial. (3) The Satyagrahi must be prepared to suffer till the end for his cause.

Pyarelal

Harijan, 31-3-'46

Appendix III

Socialist with a Difference

[From Louis Fischer's conversations with Gandhiji at Panchgani in the last week of July, 1946. A number of topics among which the Constituent Assembly was the chief one were discussed. The part relating to Socialism and Communism is given here as reported by Pyarelal.—Ed.]

"Whilst I have the greatest admiration for the self-denial and spirit of sacrifice of our Socialist friends," said Gandhiji, "I have never concealed the sharp difference between their method and mine. They frankly believe in violence and all that is in its bosom. I believe in non-violence through and through."

Socialist with a Difference

That turned the discussion on to Socialism. "You are a Socialist and so are they," interpolated Fischer.

Gandhiji: "I am, they are not. I was a Socialist before many of them were born. I carried conviction to a rabid Socialist in Johannesburg, but that is neither here nor there. My claim will live when their Socialism is dead."

"What do you mean by your Socialism?"

"My Socialism means 'even unto this last'. I do not want to rise on the ashes of the blind, the deaf and the dumb. In their Socialism, probably these have no place. Their one aim is material progress. For instance, America aims at having a car for every citizen. I do not. I want freedom for full expression of my personality. I must be

free to build a staircase to Sirus if I want to. That does not mean that I want to do any such thing. Under the other Socialism, there is no individual freedom. You own nothing, not even your body."

"Yes, but there are variations. My Socialism in its modified form means that the State does not own everything. It does in Russia. There you certainly do not own your body even. You may be arrested at any time, though you may have committed no crime. They may send you wherever they like."

"Does not, under your Socialism, the State own your children and educate them in any way it likes?"

"All States do that. America does it."

"Then America is not very different from Russia."

"You really object to dictatorship."

"But Socialism is dictatorship or else arm-chair philosophy. I call myself a Communist also."

"O, don't. It is terrible for you to call yourself a Communist. I want what you want, what Jaiprakash and the Socialists want: a free world. But the Communists don't. They want a system which enslaves the body and the mind."

"Would you say that of Marx?"

"The Communists have corrupted the Marxist teaching to suit their purpose."

"What about Lenin?"

"Lenin started it. Stalin has since completed it. When the Communists come to you, they want to get into the Congress and control the Congress and use it for their own ends."

"So do the Socialists. My Communism is not very

different from Socialism. It is a harmonious blending of the two. Communism, as I have understood it, is a natural corollary of Socialism."

"Yes, you are right. There was a time when the two could not be distinguished. But today Socialists are very different from Communists."

"You mean to say, you do not want Communism of Stalin's type."

"But the Indian Communists want Communism of the Stalin type in India and want to use your name for that purpose."

"They won't succeed."

Harijan, 4-8-'46

Appendix IV

Note on Materialism and Spiritualism

Since both the spiritualists and the materialists agree that at the root of all existence there is only one fundamental principle, it is not surprising that there should be several propositions, which both would express in the same language with the only difference that one would use the word Spirit or Life, where the other has used Nature or Matter. This might make a reader feel that essentially there is no difference between the two except one of terminology. Thus the following propositions made by Stalin about the principal features of the *Marxist Dialectical Method* and *Philosophical Materialism* would be acceptable to the Gandhian philosophy with the substitution of the word Truth, Life, God or Spirit in place of Nature Stalin says:

"1. The principal features of the *Marxist Dialectical* Method are as follows:

(a) ...dialectics (regards) nature...as a connected and integrated whole in which things, phenomena are originally connected with, dependent on, and determined by each other.

The dialectical method therefore holds that no phenomenon in nature can be understood if taken by itself, isolated from surrounding phenomena, inasmuch as any phenomenon in any realm of nature may become meaningless to us if it is not considered in connection with the surrounding conditions, but divorced from them; and that, vice versa, any phenomenon can

be understood and explained if considered in its inseparable connection with surrounding phenomena.

(b) dialectics holds that nature is not a state of rest and immobility, stagnation and immutability, but a state of continuous movement and change, of continuous renewal and development, where something is always arising and developing and something always disintegrating and dying away.

(c) ...dialectics... (regards) the process of development as a... process... which passes from in significant and imperceptible quantitative changes to open, fundamental changes, to qualitative changes; a development in which the qualitative changes occur not gradually, but rapidly and abruptly, taking the form of a leap from one state to another; they occur not accidentally but as the natural result of an accumulation of imperceptible and gradual quantitative changes.

The dialectical method therefore holds that the process of development should be understood not as movement in a circle, not as a simple repetition of what has already occurred, but as an onward and upward movement, as a transition from an old qualitative state to a new qualitative state, as a development from the simple to complex, from the lower to the higher.

(d) ...dialectics holds that internal contradictions are inherent in all things and phenomena of nature, for they all have their negative and positive sides, a past and a future, something dying away and something developing; and that the struggle between these opposites, the struggle between the old and the new, between that which is dying away and that which

is being born, between that which is disappearing and that which is developing, constitutes the internal content of the process of development, the internal content of the transformation of quantitative changes into qualitative changes."

But after granting all the above, the spiritualist would join issue with the materialist on the proposition:

"That the process of development from the lower to the higher takes place not as a harmonious unfolding of phenomena, but as a disclosure of the contradictions inherent in things and phenomena, as a "struggle" of opposite tendencies which operate on the basis of these contradictions."

The materialist, to say the least, asserts more than he knows in saying this. His observation and capacity to draw conclusions from them is far too limited to dogmatize that behind the apparent "struggle" and "contradictions" there is not "a harmonious unfolding of phenomena." There is sufficient ground to believe that the so-called contradictions and struggles are like the movements of the shuttle which unfolds the weft-thread during its toss from both the sides to weave the cloth. But for an inherent harmony behind the whole activity, no synthesis of thesis and antithesis would be possible.

K. G. Mashruwala

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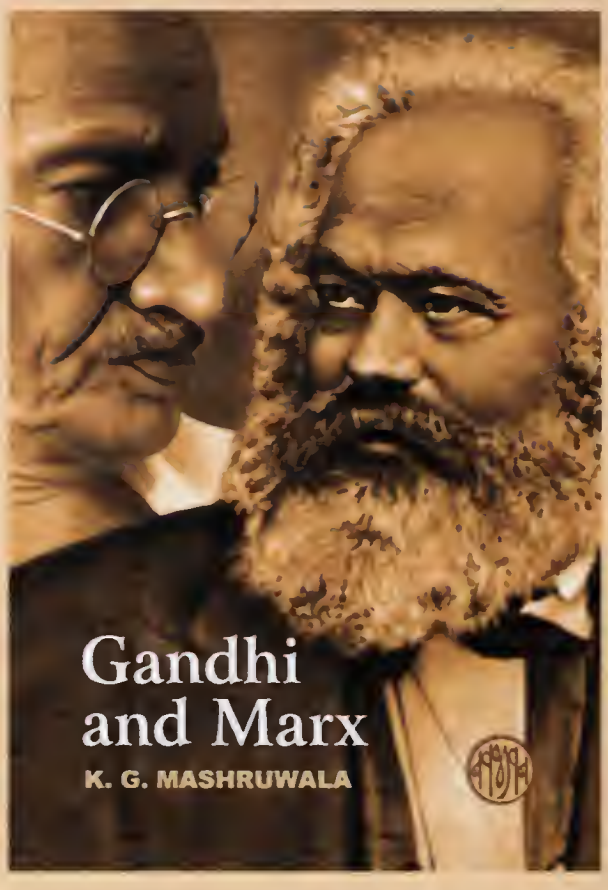

What can be a more fascinating study to us in the present age than that of a comparison between the ideologies of Gandhi, the great soul (*mahatma*), and Marx, the great thinker (*mahamuni*)? If the last hundred years or so of the social life of humanity were boiled away, the residue will most likely be these two great names. Lenin is ingested in Marx. And the shadow of Tolstoy spreads over Gandhi. The two ideologies stand face to face, each bent on swallowing up the other.

—VINOBA

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